

T. Black. Lith.r Ed.

Mohammed.

THE HISTORY

OF

MOHAMMEDANISM,

AND ITS SECTS;

DERIVED CHIEFLY FROM ORIENTAL SOURCES,

CONTAINING THE

LIFE OF MOHAMMED;

State of Arabia before and at the time of Mohammed's Birth; the Promulgation of Islam by Mohammed; the Mohammedan Creed, from an original Confession of Faith; the first four Khaliphs; the Family of Ali—the twelve Imams; the four Orthodox Sects; the Monastic Order of Islamism; the History of Mohammedanism in India; the Effects of Mohammedan Religion on Science, Literature, and Civilization; Mohammed's Night Journey to Heaven and the Nature and Style of the Koran.



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THE LIFE OF MOHAMMED.

CHAPTER I.

STATE OF ARABIA BEFORE AND AT THE TIME OF MOHAMMED'S BIRTH.

THE sterile peninsula of Arabia lies between the Red and Persian gulfs and the Indian Ocean; its remaining boundaries are the Syrian desert and the river Euphrates; from its vicinity to those parts of central and western Asia in which the great revolutions of the Oriental world were effected, it is a country famous in history; but, separated by deserts from civilized nations, it is a country of whose internal condition ancient writers knew very little, and moderns not a great deal. In the holy Scripture, Arabia is named Kedem or the East; it is uncertain from whence it derived its present appellation, but the most probable conjecture is, that it was so termed from the Hebrew *Arabah*, 'a desert.' The native traditions claim for the Arabs a double origin; they assert, that the elder tribes are descended from Joktan, the son of Heber, and the junior tribes of Mostarabs (mixed Arabs) from Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

The peninsula is divided into several districts, of which Yemen, or Happy Arabia, and Hejaz, which may be regarded as the Arabic Holy Land, are the most remarkable. From the earliest period of time, the greater part of this

peninsula has been occupied by a pastoral people, divided into tribes, having no settled habitations, but wandering over the desert in search of a scanty subsistence for their flocks and herds. The character of these wanderers, or as they are termed, Bedouins,* has been little changed by the lapse of centuries; they are ardent lovers of independence, impatient of the least control, chivalrous in their notions of honour, vindictive even to ferocity, full of wild imaginations and generous feelings, but cruel enemies and habitual robbers. The only authority which the Bedouin obeys is that of his chief, whom he regards as the father rather than the ruler of his tribe; to him consequently, he yields ready submission, nor can any thing shake his allegiance.

But all the Arabs do not dwell in tents; the temptations of permanent pasture, or profitable traffic, led to the formation of towns; the latter cause led to the building of the cities Mecca and Medina, at some very remote period, in the Hejaz, which forms part of sandy Arabia. Mecca was built at the intersection of two profitable lines of commerce, one running across the peninsula, by which the commodities of Africa and India were interchanged; the other, connecting Syria and the southern provinces of the Greek empire with Arabia Felix, and the countries round the Indian Ocean; for this overland communication was deemed preferable to encountering the dangers of the Red Sea. Religion, in the East, has always been allied

* From the Arabic *bedowi*, "a native of the desert."

with commerce; at every great mart, we find a temple erected, whose sanctity protected traffic, and reverence for which was supposed to ensure integrity. The temple of Mecca was called the Kaaba; we have already mentioned the tradition, that it was built by Abraham, and dedicated to the worship of the true God; but in the age preceding the birth of Mohammed, and probably during a long antecedent period, it had been desecrated by idolatry. The Kaaba, like the temple of Delphi in Greece, was regarded as the sanctuary of the entire nation; thither came all eminent for their skill in eloquence and poetry, the only intellectual qualifications valued by the Arabians, and within its precincts were suspended the compositions deemed worthy of being had in remembrance.

The government of Mecca was an aristocracy, modified by the old patriarchal dependence of the tribes on their chieftains. At some unknown period, one of those tribes, that of the Koreish, obtained the guardianship of the Kaaba, and in consequence, political supremacy in Mecca. They used their power for a good purpose, extending the trade of the city by the establishment of caravans, and opening to the citizens new channels of lucrative commerce. As the Koreish was the principal tribe, so in it the house of Haschem was the principal family; for several generations, the pontificate of the Kaaba, and the civil government of Mecca, had been hereditary in this family, and had been generally conducted with great ability and integrity. In the very year that Mohammed was born, they defended Mecca from a powerful foe, Abrahah,

king or viceroy of Yemen; the history of the war is grossly disguised by fiction, but as allusion is made to it in the Korán, it is necessary to give an outline of the legend.

Abrahah, the viceroy, or rather tributary monarch of Yemen, was an Ethiopian by birth, and a Christian in religion; he paid homage to the Najáshi, or sovereign of Ethiopia, but was allowed to enjoy a greater share of authority than is usually accorded to dependent monarchs. Perceiving that the celebrity of the Kaaba was one of the chief causes of the prosperity of Mecca, he erected a rival temple in his capital city Senáa, and dedicated it to Christian worship. The Koreish, soon beginning to perceive that the number of pilgrims who came to their shrine was lamentably diminished, long meditated some plan for desecrating the rival place of worship. One of their tribe was at length sent secretly to Senáa, he entered the church by night, and defiled it by a gross pollution. Not satisfied with making his escape, he boasted every where of his crime, and declared that the God of Senáa was weak and powerless. Justly incensed at the insult and profanation, Abrahah sent to demand satisfaction from the Koreish; a contemptuous answer was returned, upon which, he levied an immense army, vowing that he would pillage Mecca, and level the Kaaba with the ground. At the approach of his mighty host, many of the Meccans fled to the mountains, and scarcely enough citizens remained to man the walls. But God* would not yield to sacrilege a temple de-

* Here the legend is strangely inconsistent, for the Kaaba was at this time an idolatrous temple.

dicated to his worship by Abraham, "the father of the faithful;" when the elephant on which Abrahah rode, approached Mecca, no art could prevail on him to advance towards the city, though the animal moved readily in any other direction. While the army of Abrahah wondered at this prodigy, there appeared over their heads a flock of birds, similar to swallows, each of which carried three stones, one in each claw and one in the bill: these, the birds dropped on Abrahah's soldiers, and every one struck, fell instantly dead. As if this part of the story was not sufficiently miraculous, some of the Mohammedan doctors add, that each stone was marked with the name of the person it was destined to slay. To complete their destruction, God sent a mighty flood which swept not only the dead bodies, but many of the living into the sea. Abrahah, almost the sole survivor of his mighty host, fled to Senáa, and thence to the court of Najáshi. When brought before the king, he was asked what sort of birds had caused this destruction? upon which he pointed to one directly over his head, that had followed him all the way from Mecca. Immediately after, the bird dropped on him the fatal stone, and he fell dead in the presence of the court.

According to another account, Abrahah died of a painful disease at Senáa and the person slain before the Najáshi, was a fugitive named Abu Yascùm.

What we have already said of the corrupt state of Christianity in the East is especially applicable to Arabia, a country which was proverbially fruitful in heresies. There was a sect

in that peninsula which denied the resurrection and the immortality of the soul; there, Ebion and Beryllus first propagated their pernicious doctrines, and it was the chief seat of the Collyridians, who deemed the Virgin Mary a person of the Trinity, and derived their name from a twisted cake called *collyris*, which they offered at her shrine. Many curious circumstances are related of the early propagation of Christianity in Arabia, but that which best merits attention, is the cause assigned for the conversion of the king of Hira.

Al Nooman king of Hira, had, in a drunken fit, ordered two of his faithful companions to be buried alive; when he recovered his senses, and found that his commands had been fatally obeyed, he was overwhelmed with grief. As an expiation he erected for them a magnificent sepulchre, and dedicated two days in the year to their memory. One of these, called the Fortunate day, the king loaded the first stranger he met with magnificent gifts, but whoever presented himself on the second day, was sacrificed at the monument. On one of these days, Al Nooman met an Arab of the tribe of Tay, by whom he had once been hospitably entertained, and found himself in a great strait, being obliged either to violate his oath to the memory of his friends, or break through the laws of hospitality, which the Arabs religiously observe. At length, he offered the Arab a reprieve for a year and a day, provided that he could find a surety for his return. One of the prince's court moved with compassion, presented himself and the Arab departed. When the last day of the stipulated

term arrived, and the Arab had not appeared, his surety was led forth to suffer; but the courtiers remonstrated, declaring that he could not legally be executed until the sun sunk beneath the horizon. In the midst of the debate, the Arab appeared and offered himself to the executioner. Al Noomon astonished, asked him what religion enjoined such a scrupulous observance of faith? and was answered, the Christian; whereupon he ordered the doctrines of Christianity to be explained to him, and became a convert. He and his subjects were baptized, the lives of the Arab and his surety spared, and the barbarous custom by which they had been endangered, completely abolished.

Judaism in Arabia flourished more than in any part of the East; it was professed by whole tribes, and was the established faith in the powerful kingdom of the Hamyarites. The account of the Martyrs of the Pit, in the first chapter, shows that the Jews, when they had power, were bitter persecutors of the Christians; their cruelties were, however, restrained when the Ethiopian monarch acquired supremacy in Yemen.

The Persian religion penetrated only into a small part of north-eastern Arabia, but the Sabian superstition which seems not to have been very unlike it, prevailed over the greater part of the peninsula. The principles of Sabianism seem, indeed, common to all the false religions of Asia: its professors believed in the Divine Unity, but supposed that the Supreme had delegated his authority over the earth, to inferior intelligences, whom men were bound to worship. This doctrine opened a door for all the corruptions and variations of idolatry, even for fetichism, its

worst and most degrading form. If it was supposed, that each intelligence took charge of a particular tribe or family, the worship of the favoured portion would be given exclusively to its patron, and thus by the natural progress of corruption, the worship of the Universal God would be exchanged for that of the National, and that again, would be superseded by the worship of the fetiche, or family idol. In the Sabian superstitions, the worship of the host of heaven* (Saba) formed so conspicuous a part, that from this circumstance, it derives its name. There were temples erected in Arabia to the seven planets and the most conspicuous stars, and when Mohammed enumerates the titles of the Supreme, he especially mentions that he is the Lord of the Dog star. Some of the superstitious practices of the pagan Arabs deserve to be mentioned, because they show us how cautious historians should be, inferring identity of origin from similarity of customs. "The human mind," says a celebrated author, "whenever it is placed in the same situation, will in ages the most distant, and countries the most remote, assume the same form, and be distinguished by the same manners." In some tribes, when an Arab died, his camel was sacrificed at his grave, that he might not be obliged to go on foot in the other world. We find traces of the same superstition among our German ancestors, and the Indians of North America.† Others believed

* *Tzaba*, a host; plur. *Tzabaoth*, commonly written *Sabaoth*, hosts,

† See Longfellow's "Burial of the Minisiuk," *Readings in Poetry*, page 406.

that the soul of a person unjustly slain, found no rest, but animated the form of a bird, which cried Oscûni, Oscûni, that is, "give me to drink," until its thirst was satisfied by the murderer's blood. We find the following similar article of faith in a recent Italian publication:

"An old and barbarous notion still prevails "amongst us, that the spirits of those who have "fallen victims to treachery can never enjoy "peace if their death be not avenged with blood, "often, alas! with torrents of blood. My bro-"ther not having obtained this inhuman satisfac-"tion, is believed to be destitute in his sepulchre "of a bed to rest on when weary; of food to "refresh him, when tormented with hunger; "therefore are his room and his bed constantly "kept ready for his accommodation, and his usual "seat is invariably reserved for him at table."*

Even among the pagan Arabs there were to be found many who were disgusted by the follies of idolatry, but not disposed to seek out a better religion; these were named Zendists, and resembled in their doctrines the Jewish Sadducees and the sceptics of all ages. Zendism had made great progress among the tribe of the Koreish; those who adopted its tenets were the most bitter enemies of Mohammed, for on many occasions philosophic infidels have been foremost in urging forward the work of persecution.

We have said that hospitality and generosity were deemed by the Arabians virtues paramount to all others. This, indeed, is always the characteristic of a semi-barbarous people; "an open

* *Preziosa di Santuri, &c.* 2 vols. Turin, 1833.

hand" is regarded by the vulgar of every nation as an atonement for the worst vices, not merely because its benefits are felt more peculiarly by themselves, but because men must have advanced to that point in civilization when the notion of property is rightly conceived, before they can discover that improvidence is a crime, and prudence a virtue. The legends related in praise of extravagant generosity are innumerable; we shall quote a few relating to Hatim Tai, the favourite hero of Arabian romance; a hero of whom the following character is given, which embodies all the virtues that the sons of the desert wish to see combined in a chief. "Hatim was liberal, wise, brave and victorious: when he fought he conquered; when he plundered he carried off; when he was asked, he gave; when he shot his arrow, he hit the mark; and whomsoever he took captive, he liberated."* Hatim's fame for liberality spread over all the East: the sovereign of Damascus,† to try its extent, sent to ask him for twenty camels with red hair and black eyes: a species of camel very rare, and consequently of great value. By offering to pay a double price, Hatim collected a hundred such camels, and sent them to Damascus; the monarch not to be outdone in generosity, sent them back laden with the richest treasures, but Hatim, without a moment's hesitation, ordered the animals with their precious loads to be distributed to those from

* See the *adventures of Hatim Tai*, translated by S. Arnot, Esq., and published by the Oriental Translation Fund. One of the most interesting Oriental romances ever published.

† This story involves a gross anachronism, for in the time of Hatim Damascus formed part of the Greek empire.

whom they were originally purchased. Shortly afterwards the emperor of Constantinople wished to make the same experiment; he sent an ambassador to demand from Hatim a valuable steed to which he was much attached. The officer arrived late at night, was hospitably entertained, and in the morning stated the object of his mission. "It is too late," replied Hatim, "all my flocks and herds are at a distant pasture, and having nothing else wherewith to entertain you, I ordered that steed to be slain for your repast." The reputation of Hatim gave great offence to Naman, king of Yemen, who commissioned one of his courtiers to assassinate him. In obedience to the royal command, the emissary sought the Arabiar tents; on his road, he met a man of dignified aspect, who invited him to share his hospitality. After a splendid repast, the courtier rose to depart, and in reply to the pressing invitations of his host, stated the dangerous task that he had undertaken. To his great astonishment, the host throwing open his vest, exclaimed, "Strike boldly, I am Hatim, and strike at once, that you may have time to escape the vengeance of my friends." These words were a thunderbolt to the courtier, he fell at the feet of Hatim, and solicited his forgiveness; after which, he returned with all speed to Yemen. After the death of Hatim, his brother Cherbeka resolved to follow his example, but was dissuaded by his mother, who said, "Son, it is not in thy nature." He disregarded the admonition, and opened the store-house with seventy doors, at which his brother used to distribute alms; the mother, disguised as a beggar, presented herself at the first

door and was relieved; she had similar success at the second, but when she came to the third, Cherbeka exclaimed, "Twice have I relieved thee, and comest thou again?" His mother, discovering herself, replied, "Did I not tell thee, my son, that thou couldst not equal the liberality of thy brother? I tried him as I have tried thee, and he relieved me at each of the seventy doors, without asking me a question. But I knew thy nature and his; when I suckled thee, and one nipple was in thy mouth, thou always heldest thy hand upon the other, lest any one should seize it; but the conduct of Hatim was directly the contrary. He gave at every door, and made no observation."

The tribe, of which Hatim was the chief, refused to become proselytes to Islamism, wherefore Mohammed ordered them all to be exterminated, with the exception of Hatim's daughter. She, however, refused to survive the destruction of her kindred. "Take back," said she to the prophet, "your inhuman kindness, it would be to me a punishment ten thousand times worse than that which you prepare for my race; either pardon all, or let me perish with them." Mohammed, struck by such generous sentiments, granted, for her sake, pardon to the entire tribe.

The Arabs are celebrated for their ingenuity and subtilty of spirit; in illustration of their keen observations, the following anecdote is related by several writers. Three Arabian brothers, who were travelling for their improvement, were met by a camel-driver who asked them if they had seen his beast which had unfortunately gone astray. "Did not your camel want an eye?"

asked the first. "Had he not lost a front tooth?" was the query of the second. "Was not he lame?" interrogated the third. The camel-driver answered all these questions in the affirmative; and supposing that they had seen the beast, asked them to tell him where it was? The brothers replied, "Pursue the road on which we are travelling." After some time, they said to him, "He is laden with corn:" soon after they added, "He had a pannier of honey on one side, and of oil on the other." The owner of the camel, convinced by the particularity of their description, that they had seen the beast, reiterated his request, that they would tell him where it was; but when they swore that they had never seen the camel, and had heard of it only from himself, he regarded them as robbers, and accused them before the judge. The brothers were thrown into prison; but their rank being subsequently recognized, they were liberated and sent to the royal palace. After the monarch had entertained them hospitably, he asked them how they were able to describe with such precision an animal that they had never seen? They replied, we saw his track, and observed that the grass was cropped only at one side, whence we conjectured that he wanted an eye: we remarked, in the grass that he cropped, there was the trace of his wanting a tooth; and from the impression of his feet, one appeared to have been dragged, whence we conjectured that he was lame. The same impression showed that he was heavily laden; and as the fore-feet had sunk deeper than those behind, we guessed that the load was grain, which is usually placed close to the camel's neck;

seeing ants in clusters on one side of the road, we knew that drops of oil had fallen there; while swarms of flies on the other side showed honey to have been scattered in that direction.

The love that the Arabians have for their noble breed of horses is well known; and equally notorious is the merit of their steeds. They are generally of a delicate make, but able to support the fatigue of very long journeys; well-proportioned, spirited, with small bellies, little ears, and a short tail. They have so little vice, that they allow themselves to be tended by women and children, and they wander quietly over the plains, mixed with the other cattle: hence the Arab horsemen frequently dispense with the use of a saddle, and use a simple halter as a bridle. They are able to endure thirst; and are frequently fed with camels' milk. They receive their food in small portions, and are rarely shod, because shoes are not necessary in the smooth plains of the desert. It is a common proverb, "Cherish the steed that has the breast of a lion, and the rump of a wolf." Great attention is paid to the genealogy of the different races, and certificates of their blood and antiquity are common. We shall, as a matter of curiosity, insert one of these documents, extracted from *Les Mines de l'Orient*, vol. ii., to which we have been indebted for this brief notice of the horses of Arabia.

"In the name of God, the most merciful, from "whom alone we expect aid and succour. The "prophet says, 'My people shall never join to "affirm a lie.'

"The following is the object of this authentic "document:—we the undersigned attest, certify,

"and declare, swearing by our fate, our fortune, "and our girdles, that the bay mare, having a "white star in her forehead, and white fetlocks "on the off side, is of a noble breed for three "generations on both sides. Her dam was of the "Seglaman, and her sire of the Elisebban blood; "she unites all the qualities of those mares, of "which the prophet says, 'Their breasts are "treasures, and their backs seats of honour.'

"Supported by the testimony of our predeces-"sors, we attest, on our fate and fortunes, that "the mare in question is of noble descent, that "she is as pure as milk, renowned for swiftness "and speed, able to bear thirst, and accustomed "to the fatigues of long journeys. In witness "whereof, we have delivered the present certifi-"cate, after what we have seen and known "ourselves. God is the best of witnesses."—Signed and sealed.

The similarity in character between the Arabian heroes and the knights-errant of the middle ages, is naturally suggested by their common love for their steeds, their high sense of honour, their thirst of revenge, and their praise of hospitality; but this is a topic which would lead us too far from our immediate subject; enough has been said to show what was the genius and character of the nation in which Islamism was first promulgated.

The romance of Antar gives us the most perfect notion of Arabic chivalry; the age of the hero's exploits is fabled to have been half a century before the coming of Mohammed, and consequently it furnishes us with a picture of manners, drawn by a native artist. The records

on which this romance is founded, existed in the time of Mohammed, for one of the traditions, traced to him with the greatest certainty, is his recommendation of these national legends; "Relate to your children the traditions concerning Antar, for they will render their hearts firmer than the rocks." In the reign of Harún-al-Raschíd, the celebrated cotemporary of Charlemagne, these legends were first formed into a continuous story by Assmäi, one of the learned men who adorned the court of that Khaliph. Some additions were made in the reign of the Khaliph Maimún, who was, like Antar himself, the son of a slave; but the final edition of the work was published in an uncertain age, by Seyid Yussúf-ebn-Ismail. The similarity of the style in the greater part of the romance to the Moallakat, or collection of the poems suspended in Kaaba before the age of Mohammed, one of which was the composition of Antar himself, attests its great antiquity, or at least the antiquity of the materials from which it was composed. M. Von Hammer, undoubtedly the first Oriental scholar in Europe, thus speaks of this extraordinary picture of Arabic chivalry:—"The whole of this work may be esteemed as a faithful account of the principal tribes of the Arabs, and particularly of the tribe of Abs, from which Antar sprung, in the time of Nushirvan, king of Persia, more faithful *in painting manners,* than describing events."* A great portion of the work has been translated into English by Mr.

* See M. Von Hammer's articles on *Antar* in *Les Mines de l'Orient* for 1802, and also in the January and February numbers of the *New Monthly Magazine* for 1820.

Hamilton; but a more interesting and characteristic part has been recently published in France by M. A. C. de Perceval,* containing the account of the death of Antar, an abridgment of which may be useful in illustrating our present subject. It is necessary to premise that Antar is represented as commissioned by Providence to humble the savage pride of the Arabian warriors, and prepare the way for Mohammed. The son of a black concubine, he was designed by his father for no nobler occupation than the guardianship of the flocks, but the services which he rendered to the tribe of Banu-Abs, the admiration inspired by his valour, and the fame of his poetical abilities, enabled him to triumph over the prejudices which condemned him to a servile condition. He soon attained the rank of a noble, and, notwithstanding the obstacles raised by a thousand enemies, envious of his glory, he married Abla, a young lady of illustrious birth, his paternal cousin, who had long been the object of his warmest affections.

Amongst the warriors whom he had subdued was Wezar, a fierce and vindictive savage, who laid several plots against the life of his generous conqueror. Twice Antar heroically granted him pardon; but when a third attempt at assassination was made, he ordered the wretch to be deprived of sight. These details were necessary to explain the following extract; which, however, is an imitation rather than a translation, many

* In No LXIII. of the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, published August, 1833.

details and references to preceding facts being omitted.*

THE DEATH OF ANTAR.

WEZAR secretly meditated revenge:—though his eyes were deprived of sight, he had lost little of his skill in archery. His ear, accustomed by long habit to trace the movements of wild beasts by the sound of their footsteps sufficed to direct his aim, and never did an arrow from his bow miss the mark. His sleepless hatred eagerly received the news which fame brought him respecting his enemy. He learned that Antar, after a perilous and distant expedition, was about to return home, rendered more illustrious by his new exploits, and bringing an immense booty as rich as the royal treasures of Chosroes. On receiving the intelligence, Wezar wept with envy and rage; he summoned Nedim, his faithful slave, and thus addressed him:—"Too long has for-

* "The English reader will be surprised to find in these productions so few of those lofty epithets and inflated metaphors, which are generally considered characteristic of the Oriental mode of composition; he will, probably, be more surprised to hear, that during the flourishing periods of Arabian literature, this bombast style was almost unknown, and that the best writers, both of poetry and prose, expressed themselves in a language as chaste and simple as that of Prior or of Addison.........The writer who had obtained celebrity in the court of Bagdad during the splendour of the Khaliphat, would have smiled equally as the prosaic poetry of his European cotemporaries, the bards and the troubadours, and at the poetic prose of his own countrymen, the present Oriental."—*Professor Carlyle's Specimens*, Preface, page 9.

"tune protected him, whose success drives me
"to despair. Ten tedious years have elapsed
"since the glowing iron seared these sightless
"eye-balls, and yet I am not revenged. But at
"last the moment has arrived in which I shall
"efface my shame, and quench in his blood the
"flame which devours my heart. Antar is en-
"camped on the banks of the Euphrates; thither
"I will pursue him, and lie concealed in the
"reeds and bushes until fate delivers him into
"my hands." He orders his slave to bring him his camel, whose speed rivalled that of the swift ostrich. He arms himself with his bow, and fills his quiver with poisoned arrows. Nedim compels the camel to kneel before his master, aids Wezar to mount, and guides the steps of the docile animal.

When they had plunged into the dreary depths of the arid desert, Wezar gave vent to his wrath; "My mutilated eyelids can never close
"in sweet sleep; an eternal night surrounds me.
"Thrice vanquished, I have rolled in the dust,
"and my tribe rejects me as an enemy. Misfor-
"tunes be upon thee, Antar, son of Schedad,
"sole cause of my torment and my shame; envy
"consumes my soul and wastes my body. May
"favourable fortune at last cause thee to fall by
"this hand." After several days of toilsome journeying they passed the deserts, and entered the plains which the Euphrates waters, a fertile country planted with trees, and clothed with verdure. When they reached the river, Nedim cast his eyes towards the opposite bank; he beholds tents richly decorated, numerous flocks, camels wandering over the plain, lances planted

in the earth, horses harnessed, and picketted before the tents of their masters. He hears the songs of young maidens, and the sound of musical instruments: one tent more beautiful and exalted than the rest, was erected at a short distance from the river; in front of it was a long lance, and a horse as black as ebony. Nedim recognised the noble courser and terrible lance of Antar; he halted the camel, and concealed himself and his master behind the bushes. When night had spread her gloomy shade over the earth, Wezar said to his slave, "Let us quit this "place; distant voices sound in my ear. Place "me near the river, my heart tells me that a "signal blow is about to render my name illus-"trious for ever." Nedim leads him by the hand, places him opposite the tent of Antar, and present him his bow and quiver. Wezar chooses the sharpest of his arrows, fits it to the bow, and with attentive ear waits the moment of vengeance.

Antar, in profound security, was enjoying the company of his beloved Abla; he was suddenly disturbed by the baying of the watch-dogs round the camp, and quitting his spouse, he rushed into the open air. The night was dark and cloudy; hearing the baying of the dogs renewed from the side of the camp next the river, he rushed to the bank in an evil hour, and called his brother Jerir to reconnoitre the other side. Scarcely had he raised his powerful voice, which made hills and valleys resound, when an arrow struck his right side, and penetrated deep into his body.

No groan, no complaint unworthy his courage,

betrayed his pain; he drew the shaft from the wound and exclaimed, "O thou, whose perfidi-"ous hand is guided by the sound of my voice, "to strike me in the shades of night, would "that I could know thee, that I might pursue "thee to the depths of the desert, and give thy "flesh to feed the birds of the air, and the "beasts of the field. Traitor, who dared not "attack me in the face of day, thou shalt not "escape my vengeance, thou shalt not enjoy the "fruits of thy treachery!" Wezar heard these words, and fear seized his heart. Believing that his shaft had failed, the idea of Antar, and of the punishment he would inflict, so terrified him, that he fell at the feet of his slave without motion. Nedim, seeing that his master lay stark and cold, quickly mounted the camel and rode away.

In the mean time Jerir had come up, at the sound of his brother's voice. Antar informed him that he had been wounded by a shaft from the oposite side of the river, by an unknown hand, ordered him to pursue the assassin, and returned to his tent with tottering steps. Jerir laid aside his robes and plunged into the stream; soon he reaches the opposite bank, he gropes about in the darkness, and finds a body lying senseless on the sand, near which he discovers a bow and quiver. Uncertain whether this motionless body could be restored to life, but hoping to gain some elucidation from the sight of the body, he places it upon his shoulders and again crossing the river, enters the tent of his brother.

Extended on the bed of sickness, surrounded

by his disconsolate friends, Antar was a prey to the most cruel agonies. The tender Abla was bandaging his wound, which she bathed with her tears. At this moment Jerir entered, bearing the body of Wezar, which with the bow and arrows, he laid at the feet of his brother. Scarcely had Antar cast a glance on the mutilated visage, where ferocity was still imprinted, ere he recognised the implacable enemy who had so often sworn his destruction. He doubted not that this hand had directed the fatal shaft, and he knew that the arrow was poisoned. Then sweet hope abandoned his heart, and the image of death alone presented itself to his view. He contemplated it with resignation, and, lost in thought, preserved for a time a profound silence. The combats in which he had conquered Wezar, without being able to subdue his soul of iron, the perseverance with which the traitor had pursued his vengeance, finally, divine justice which had not permitted the assassin to survive his crime, presented themselves to his mind. At length, waking from his reverie, he exclaimed, "The misfortune of mine enemy has satisfied my "soul; his death consoles me for my approaching dissolution, which he will not witness. "Yes, we should thank destiny when we survive "an enemy, a day, or even an instant." Then addressing the corpse of Wezar, he said, "Wretch, thou hast not tasted the pleasure of "vengeance, for I have survived thy death. But "you, warriors, jealous of my glory, will rejoice "in my calamitous fate; you, rivals that I have "subdued, whose heart, gnawed by envy, cannot "forget the shame of defeat. Triumph then,

"since such is the immutable will of the Eter-
"nal Being, whose decrees no mortal can foresee
"or avoid."

"Son of my uncle," said Abla, "why renounce
"hope? Why let your courage sink? Should a
"slight wound of an arrow discourage you, who,
"despising the edge of sabre and point of
"lance, have borne so many deep and danger-
"ous wounds, whose scars cover your body."
"Abla," replied Antar, "my life approaches its
"close, the arrow which struck me was poisoned.
"Recognise in that carcass the features of
"Wezar, and cease to flatter yourself with vain
"hope."

At these words Abla made the air resound with her cries, she rent her garments, tore her flowing locks, and cast dust upon her head. The women who surrounded her joined in her grief, the camp soon responded to their plaintive cries, and to the silence of night, succeeded the tumult and the cries of despair.

Then Antar said to his weeping friends, "Dry your tears, the Most High has subjected "us all to the same law, and no one can withdraw "himself from the decrees of destiny." Then turning to Abla, he said, "Beloved spouse, who "shall defend thy honour and life after the death "of Antar? I know well that the tribe of Banu-"Abs, deprived of the support of my arm, must "be overwhelmed by its numerous enemies, and "annihilated by all the tribes of Arabia, whom "vengeance will unite against it. A second "husband, *another I*, can alone save you from "the horrors of slavery. Of all the warriors of

"the desert, Amer, and Zeid-al-Khaïl*, are those "whose valour will best protect your life and "liberty. Choose then one of them, and offer "him your hand. In order that you may return "safely to the children of Abs and securely pass "the desert, you must mount my courser Adjar, "and clothe yourself in my armour: in this dis-"guise fear no attack, but proceed with confi-"dence, not deigning to salute any warriors you "may meet. The sight of the horse and arms "of the son of Schedad, will suffice to intimi-"date the boldest."

The curtain of darkness was now withdrawn, morning appeared in smiling beauty, and began to colour the mountain-tops. Antar caused himself to be carried out of his tent, and there distributed to his friends and relatives the numerous flocks, camels, and coursers that he possessed, and all the booty he had gained in his late expedition, reserving for Abla the most considerable portion. After this distribution he bade adieu to his friend Amrú, and ordered him to return to his tribe, before the report of his death spread through Arabia, and encouraged their common enemies to assail him. Vainly Amrú protested that he would not quit him, and that he wished to escort Abla to the tribe of Banu-Abs. "No," replied Antar, "whilst a spark of life remains, "Abla shall have no arm but mine to defend "her. Depart; if you desire to expose your "life for friendship, go to combat the tribe of

* Zeid-al-Khaïl survived to the age of Mohammed, and embraced the faith of Isllàm; his surname was changed from al-Khaïl (the equestrian), to al-Khaïr (the beneficent.)

"Banu-Nebhan; go to avenge my death on the family of Wezar." Amrú yields with regret; he swears to execute his will, and the two friends mingle their tears in a last embrace. Antar gives orders to prepare for his departure; the sorrowful Abla permits herself to be clothed in the weighty armour of her spouse; girt with his ponderous sword, holding in her hands his dreaded lance, she mounts on Abjar, whilst the slaves place Antar in the litter that Abla was accustomed to use in happier times.

They commenced the journey; the slaves drove the flocks and led the camels that bore the baggage; behind them came the horsemen; the march was closed by Abla and Antar, accompanied by the indefatigable Jerir, who went before the gallant courser Abjar,* and his nephew Khadrúf, who guided the camel that bore the litter.

Scarcely had they lost sight of the fertile banks of the Euphrates, and begun to enter upon the immensity of the desert, when they perceived at a distance, tents that seemed like obscure points in the horizon, or like a black border to the azure drapery of heaven. It was a rich and powerful tribe; the warriors who composed it equalled in number the sands of Irak, and in courage the lions of the forests. As soon as their vigilant eyes had detected the advance of the feeble caravan, three hundred of the bravest sprung upon their coursers, seized their lances, and advanced to the charge. As

* Von Hammer says the true name of this celebrated steed was *Ebhar*.

rapid as the fleet gazelles their steeds dashed over the intervening space, and they were soon within a bow-shot of the caravan. Then they recognised the arms and litter of the hero; "It "is Antar," they cried, "yes it is he who tra-"vels with his spouse. Behold his arms, his "steed, and the magnificent litter of Abla. Let "us return to our tents, and not expose our-"selves to the wrath of this invincible warrior." Already had they turned the heads of their horses, and were about to return to their tribe, when one of the party requested a moment's delay. He was an old Scheikh, whose crafty spirit penetrated into every secret, and pierced the veils of mystery. "Friends,*" said he, "It "is certainly the lance of Antar, his helmet, his "cuirass, and his courser, whose colour is that "of night; but it is neither his stature nor his "fierce countenance; it is the stature and bear-"ing of a timid woman. Believe me Antar is "dead, or else a dangerous malady hinders him "from mounting his horse; and the warrior that "Abjar carries, the pretended Antar, is Abla "clothed in the arms of her spouse, to intimi-"date us, while the true Antar, perhaps, lies "dying or dead in that litter." Struck by these remarks his companions returned, none of them, however, dared to commence the attack; but they determined to follow the caravan at a distance, in the hope of seeing some circumstance occur which might determine their uncertainty.

The sun had now risen in his strength, and shot his fiercest rays on the sands of the desert,

* *Friends;* literally, cousins or clansmen.

which glowed under their heat like the ashes of a furnace. Abla, weak and delicate, could no longer support the weight of the ponderous lance, she allowed it to sink by her side, and its point traced a furrow in the yielding sand.* At sight of this, the horsemen, who observed all their movements, no longer doubted the reality of their suspicions; they couched their lances, dashed their spurs into the flanks of their coursers, and hasted to precipitate themselves on a troop, which they well believed was too feeble to make resistance.

The cries of his foe-men, the neighing of the steeds, the voice of Abla crying for aid, strike the ear of Antar, who was extended in the litter almost without sense or motion, and rouse him from his lethargy. Danger restores his strength; he raises himself, shows his head, and raises a terrible cry, which carries horror into every heart. At his shout, loud as the thunder, the hair of the pursuing coursers stood erect; they recoiled, fled, and bore over the plains their riders, chilled by the same terror as themselves, and saying to one another, "Alas! Evil "be to this day! Antar still lives; he designed "to try the inhabitants of the desert, and prove "what tribe would be bold enough to attempt "the conquest of his spouse and his treasures." In vain the old scheikh, who had already inspired them with confidence, strove once more to re-

* Abla is, in the original, betrayed by a different circumstance, which though more characteristic of Bedouin ingenuity, is so utterly at variance with European customs that it was necessary to change it.

assure them. The greater part remained deaf to his voice, and continued their retreat towards their own tribe. Thirty alone consented to remain with him and to continue to watch the caravan.

In spite of his pains, which every moment became more fierce, Antar resolved to resume his armour, and remount his charger. He ordered Abla to be placed in the litter, and marched by her side. "Rest tranquil," he said, "Antar "still watches over your safety, but these are "the last moments that he can consecrate to "your protection." Abla replied by a look full of heart-felt sorrow. "Antar," said his companions, detecting his sufferings in his attitude, "Antar, weaken not thy remaining strength, "once again ascend the litter; often hast thou "protected us by thy valour, to-day we will "fight for thee." He replied to them, "I thank "you my friends; you are brave, but you are "not Antars; advance, I hope still to conduct "you safely to your tribe."

At the close of day they reached a valley not far from the place where the tribe of Banù-Abs used to encamp. It is called the vale of antelopes, and the mountains which form it allow of but one passage through a narrow glen, where scarcely three horsemen could ride abreast. Antar halted until all the flocks, and the camel bearing Abla had gone past. When he had seen the caravan march before him, he advanced to the entrance of the defile. At that moment his pains augmented, his vitals were racked with convulsive agonies, and at each step of his cours-

er, he felt the most dreadful torments. At length he checked Abjar, and propping himself on his lance, remained motionless.

The thirty warriors who followed the chase, seeing him in this position, halted at the other extremity of the valley. "Antar," said they to each other, "has discovered that we are watching "his march, doubtless he waits us in this defile, "to destroy us in a moment. Let us take ad- "vantage of the night which now hides us under "its friendly shade, to regain our tents and "rejoin our brethren." "Friends," said the Scheikh to them, "listen not to the counsels of "fear; the motionless state of Antar is the "sleep of death. What! know you not his "impetuous courage? Did Antar ever wait for "the assault of an enemy? If he was alive, would "he not long since have rushed upon you, like "an eagle pouncing on its prey? Advance bold- "ly, then, or if you refuse to continue your "march, at least wait here until returning dawn "shall dispel all doubts."

Persuaded afresh by this discourse, his companions remained, but still disquieted and alarmed, they passed the night on their steeds, without yielding to the sweets of repose. Day at length began to dawn, and dispel the shades which hid the valley. Antar was seen still at the entrance of the defile in the same attitude, and his docile courser stood motionless as the rider. At this extraordinary sight, the astonished warriors consulted together for a long time; all appearances tend to prove the death of Antar; yet no one dares to approach him, so great is the fear that he inspires. The aged Scheikh soon

put an end to their irresolution; dismounting from his steed, he pricked the animal with the point of his lance, and drove him down the defile. No sooner had the steed reached the foot of the mountains than Abjar, with a loud neigh, dashed towards him. Antar falls to the ground, like an undermined tower, and the clash of his arms echoes through the hills.

The warriors, who perceived his fall, hasted to approach. They were astonished to see extended on the earth, one who had made Arabia tremble, and they ceased not to admire his gigantic stature. Renouncing all hope of overtaking the caravan, which must, during the night, have safely reached the tribe Banú-Abs; they contented themselves with despoiling Antar of his arms, to carry them home as a trophy. In vain they attempted to seize his gallant steed. After the death of his master, Abjar no longer found a rider worthy to press his back, more rapid than the lightning, he disappeared from their view, and hid himself in the deserts.

It is said that one of those plunderers, touched with compassion for the calamities of a hero, whom his exploits had rendered so illustrious, bedewed the corpse with tears, covered it with earth, and thus apostrophized the deceased warrior. "Honour be unto thee gallant soldier, "who during thy life hast been the defender of "thy tribe, and who, even after thy death, hast "protected thy followers by the terrors of thy "countenance! May thy soul be blessed through "eternity, may kindly dews refresh the turf "beneath which you repose."

CHAPTER II.

THE PROMULGATION OF ISLAM BY MOHAMMED.

The biography of Mohammed is a subject of grave importance, because the incidents of his life moulded his doctrines, and there scarcely ever appeared a lawgiver whose personal character, and even personal adventures, were more deeply impressed on his political and religious system. To write a complete history of his life, would be inconsistent with our limits, and not necessary for our immediate purpose; our business is only with those incidents in his career that developed his character, and influenced his conduct; these are fortunately easy to be ascertained, for he has alluded to most of them in the Koran. The legends respecting his miraculous power, and the traditions respecting his domestic economy, we shall dismiss once for all, with the remark, that the former are contradicted by his own express declaration, and the latter possess not the slightest interest. It will also be unnecessary for us to examine the controverted points in the history of his career, because they are for the most part insignificant, and there is a sufficiency of certain facts to enable us to form a fair estimate of his motives as a reformer, his capacity as a legislator, and his claims as an inspired teacher.

Mohammed was born at Mecca, A. D. 569; he was of the family of Hashem, the most illustrious in the tribe of the Koreish, and the hereditary guardians of the Kaaba. His grandfather had been governor of Mecca, when the city was at-

tacked by the Ethiopians; the valour he displayed in repelling the enemy, gained universal applause.* The father of Mohammed died young, leaving him only five camels and a single slave, but his grandfather took charge of the destitute child, and on his death-bed intrusted him to the care of his uncle Abu-Thaleb. The orphan was fortunate in obtaining such a guardian; Abu-Thaleb treated him as one of his own children, and gave him the ordinary education of an Arabian youth. It is probable that this included some knowledge of reading and writing, and that when Mohammed calls himself "the illiterate prophet," he does not mean that he was wholly ignorant, but that he had not devoted his time exclusively to literature. From his earliest years he displayed an intelligent and reflective mind, he loved to indulge in solitary meditation, and when his companions wished him to share in their amusements, he replied, "Man was created for a nobler purpose than indulgence in frivolous pursuits." At the age of thirteen he visited Syria in company with his uncle. The nobles of Mecca were all engaged in commerce, they transported to Damascus and other Syrian cities, the dates, perfumes, and spices of Yemen and India, exchanging them for corn, raisins, cloths, and other productions of the Eastern empire. How often these visits were

* We are informed, on respectable authority, that Amina, the mother of Mohammed, was a Jewess, converted to Christianity by the Syrian Monk, Sergius. To her maternal instructions he is supposed to have been indebted, for his first religious impressions; and though he did not remain long under her care, yet the slight knowledge he thus obtained of pure religion, saved him from falling into the gross idolatry which prevailed in Mecca.—Von Hammer's *History of the Assassins*, chap. I.

repeated, it is not easy to determine; but before Mohammed had attained the age of manhood, he was celebrated in Mecca for his commercial skill and enterprise.* Previous to this also he had obtained high praise for valour, in a compaign that he made under the command of Abu-Thaleb.

A rich widow, named Kadijah, employed Mohammed as her factor and agent; pleased with his conduct, she gave him her hand in marriage. The nuptials were celebrated with extraordinary magnificence, two camels were slain for the entertainment, and the slaves of Kadijah danced to the sound of timbrels for the amusement of the guests. Raised thus to the first rank in Mecca, Mohammed did not forget the kindness of his guardian, but generously took charge of some of his uncle's children, for Abu-Thaleb had recently experienced some severe reverses of fortune.

For the next fiften years of his life, we have little better than conjecture to offer. He still retained his contemplative disposition, and retired from the world one month in every year, to enjoy the luxury of meditation in the caverns of Mount Hira. Tradition obscurely hints at conversations which he had at various times with Monks

* During these visits, Mohammed is supposed to have become acquainted with Sergius, and to have received from him instruction in the tenets then adopted by the Syrian Christians. These tenets, unfortunately, united many gross Oriental superstitions with the simple truths of Christianity. However the truth of this tradition may be, a comparison of the Koran with the works of Ephrem Syrus, indisputably proves that it was from the Syrian Christians Mohammed obtained those childish legends which he invariably prefers to the authentic records of the Evangelists.

and Jewish Rabbins; it would, indeed, be impossible that a person of his eminent abilities could have been indifferent to the religious discussions, which at the period shook all western Asia. He was probably a sincere inquirer after truth, but when monastic legends were presented to him instead of the Gospel, and Talmudic tales in the place of what was spoken by the prophets, his naturally strong mind discovered that true religion must be something more pure and simple than the speculations of dreaming monastics, whether Jew or Christian. Had he enjoyed an opportunity of discovering the simple evangelical truth, abstracted from the additions made to it by human craft, or human folly, he might have received it as a solution of all his difficulties, but there is good reason to believe, that he never saw the Bible in its simple purity, and was only acquainted with the forged imitations and countless perversions of the sacred text. Solitary meditation is the parent of a regulated enthusiasm; not the fierce flame which a breath can kindle, and a breath extinguish, but that sober, steady determination, which presses on to a definite object, using every means for its accomplishment that prudence or wisdom may dictate. It is not unusual for the mind in solitude to embody as it were the phantasms of imagination, and mistake its own creations for absolute existences. Inexplicable visions have appeared to men of the strongest intellect; nay, such men are peculiarly liable to these deceptions; the gigantic figure that foretold Cromwell's greatness, and the ghost of Cæsar in the tent of Brutus, were the creations of powerful intellect under

high excitement. We do not, therefore, stigmatize Mohammed as a liar, for saying that the angel Gabriel commanded him to undertake the prophetic mission; it is very possible, nay, it is highly probable, that a vivid imagination imposed upon his senses, and that he really believed himself divinely commissioned.*

Mohammed first announced his commission to his wife Kadijah, she instantly declared her belief on him, saying, "I have long been pesuaded that thou wouldest become the prophet of the Arabians." The next converts were Zeid, Mohammed's slave, his cousin Ali, the son of Abu-Thaleb; Abu-Bekr, a man of considerable influence with the Koreish, Othman, and several other persons of distinction. To all these he gave the name of Mussulmans, that is, "persons wholly resigned to the will of God." Devotees making similar professions, have never been wanting in the East; the Jews had their Essenes, the Christians their Monks, the Persians their recluse Magi, and the Brahmins and Buddhists a countless variety of ascetic sects. The ambition of Mohammed was at first limited to the establishment of an order, or sect; it was directed by circumstances to the foundation of an empire. To fix the faith of his followers, he pretended to have frequent revelations from heaven; and here we begin to find imposture mingling with his enthusiam; he declared that he was himself unable to read, but that the messages from heaven were read to him by the angel Gabriel, in order that he might

* The history of Cromwell affords a similar instance of a clever man beginning with enthusiasm, and ending with imposture.

recite them to his secretaries. Such was the first origin of the Koran, a word which signifies, "that which ought to be read." A more particular account of this extraordinary book will be found in another chapter.

For some time the new doctrines were propagated in secret; three years elapsed before Mohammed ventured to propound them to his own family; he prepared a feast, to which he invited his uncles and his other relatives, but an accident broke up the assembly before he could find an opportunity of addressing them. On a second occasion he was more fortunate; the guests, in number about forty, expressed an anxiety to hear his statement, and Mohammed eagerly embraced the opportunity. His speech, if we may believe the traditions respecting it, was admirably calculated to make a deep impression; he exposed the follies of idolatry with severe ridicule, asking what reliance could be placed on senseless images, whose eyes saw not, and whose ears heard not? In solemn language he announced the truth of the divine unity, and called on them to worship the one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the moral Governor of the universe, who hath prepared a recompense in a future life for the evil and the good. Finally, in a spirited peroration, he exclaimed, "Is there one among you who wishes to be my vizier and lieutenant, as Aaron was to Moses?" The young Ali responded to the call, and Mohammed declared him for the future invested with vicarial authority. Of the other guests some believed, but others mocked, saying to Abu-Thaleb, "Hereafter you must be obedient to your son."

Having thus made a commencement, Mohammed began to preach publicly in Mecca, and daily added to the number of his disciples. The Koreish soon took the alarm; they dreaded the loss which their temple would experience, if idolatry fell into disrepute, and after trying remonstrance in vain, they began to persecute the new sect. Protected by powerful friends, and by his connexion with the ruling family of the Hashemites, Mohammed was enabled to defy his enemies, but many of his followers, less fortunate, were forced to fly, and seek a refuge in Abyssinia. In spite of persecution, however, the new religion spread, and among others, Mohammed added to his proselytes, his uncle Hamza, and the celebrated Omar. But these advantages were counterbalanced by the death of his uncle Abu-Thaleb, who, though he had never become a convert, had always protected his nephew from the violence of the Koreish. In consequence of this, Mohammed sought refuge in the town of Tayef, three days' journey from Mecca.

The reasons that induced him to choose this place of retreat, are supposed to have been the influence his uncle possessed in that city, and the high character for valour enjoyed by its inhabitants. He hoped, by converting the people of Tayef, to gain the means of taking vengeance on his countrymen in Mecca. But, his expectations were disappointed; a Tayefite, to whom he spoke of his pretensions, replied, "If you are the envoy of God, you need no allies, if you are an impostor, you are unworthy of an answer." Similar sentiments were expressed by others, and Mohammed returned home disappointed.

For some time he lived in retirement, apparently yielding to the storm, but really waiting for an opportunity to exert himself with advantage.

The sacred month, in which the caravans of pilgrims came to Mecca, was, like the period called "The Truce of God," in the Middle Ages, a season of universal peace. The most ferocious robbers respected this consecrated time, while it lasted, hereditary animosities were laid aside, and crowds fearlessly come from every quarter to celebrate the annual jubilee in the national temple. Mohammed announced his mission to the strangers, and recited to them some portions of the Koran: "I am," said he, "the Apostle of "God; the book that I read to you, is the proof "of my mission. The Lord commands you to re-"ject what is unworthy of him, and to serve him "alone. It is his will that you should believe on "me, and serve me as his prophet." These declarations, delivered with energy, and supported by the poetic style of the Koran, produced a deep impression on the minds of his hearers; but especially on the pilgrims from Yatreb, or, as it is now generally called, Medina, whom accidental circumstances had prepared for some such announcement.

Yatreb was occupied by two tribes, one of idolatrous Arabs, and one of Jews. A fierce war arose between the rival races; it terminated in the conquest of the Jews, who were reduced to slavery. Amid their sufferings they were frequently heard to exclaim: "Oh! if the appointed "time of the Messiah had arrived, we would seek "him, and he would deliver us from this tyranny." When the Medinese pilgrims heard the account

of the new prophet at Mecca, they said to one another, "Can this be the Messiah of whom "the Jews were constantly speaking? Let us find him out, and gain him over to our interests." Mohammed at once saw what an advantage he had gained by such a prepossession; he declared "that he was the person whom the Jews expected, but that his mission was not confined to a single people, for all who believed in God and his prophet should share its advantages."*

The Medinese pilgrims, on their return home, became zealous preachers of Islám; it was a recommendation of the new religion, that it was unpopular at Mecca; for commercial jealousy had excited a bitter spirit of rivalry between the two cities. Mohammed, conscious of the vast accession of strength he had received, made now a decisive advance in imposture, and published the narrative, at once ludicrously absurd and daringly blasphemous, of his journey to the highest heavens in company with the angel Gabriel,† and his personal interview with God. Several of his disciples were shocked by this monstrous tale, and probably the whole system of Mohammedanism would have fallen to pieces on the instant, had not Abu-Bekr, with ready zeal, attested by oath the veracity of the prophet.

* This anecdote, which appears here for the first time in the English language, was extracted from the chronicle of Thabari, by M. Reinand. It throws a new important light on the character and career of Mohammed. Abulfeda says that some of the Medinese Jews believed on him; the reader will remember that Cromwell, whose character is so very similar to that of Mohammed, is said to have been mistaken for the promised Messiah by some of his Jewish contemporaries.

† See an abstract of his extraordinary narrative in *Readings in Biography.*

This is the critical period in the life of Mohammed, when his enthusiasm began to degenerate into downright imposture; we can distinctly trace in the Koran the utter change which success wrought in his character. He had first preached patience and forbearance, in terms not unworthy of a true Christian: "Pardon your enemies," he said, "until God cometh with his commandment;" but when assured of support at Medina, he declared, "Permission is granted unto those who take arms against the unbelievers, for that they have been unjustly persecuted by them: and God is certainly able to assist them." The permission of defensive warfare, when his power was still further strengthened, was changed into an exhortation, or rather command, to propagate the new religion by force of arms. "Thus God propoundeth unto men their examples. When ye "encounter the unbelievers, strike off their "heads, until ye have made a great slaughter "among them; and bind them in bonds: and "either give them a free dismission afterwards, "or exact a ransom, until the war shall have "laid down its arms. This shall ye do. Verily, "if God pleased, he could take vengeance on "them without your assistance; but he commandeth you to fight his battles, that he may "prove the one of you by the other. And as "to those who fight in defence of God's true "religion, God will not suffer their works to "perish: he will guide them and dispose their "hearts aright; and he will lead them into paradise of which he hath told them. O true "believers, if ye assist God, by fighting for his

"religion, he will assist you against your ene-"mies, and will set your feet fast; but as for "the infidels, let them perish; and their works "shall God render vain." Up to the moment that the Medinese asked the question, "Art thou the Messiah," it is possible that Mohammed might have been an honest reformer, and animated by the noblest motives. But his first step in imposture was fatal in its consequences, it tainted at once, and for ever, his entire system.

When the magistrates of Mecca learned the great addition of strength that the new religion had received, they were filled with terror, and to free themselves from danger, resolved on the death of the innovator. But Mohammed had anticipated the crisis; He had lost his wife Kadijah, and most of his children, some time before, and there was no tie that bound him to Mecca. Having secretly sent off his favourite disciples to Medina, he took the same road himself, and escaped in safety from the vigorous pursuit of the Koreish. This event is called the Hégira, or "flight," and has been ever since used as an epoch by the Mohammedans. It took place A. D. 622, when Mohammed was about fifty-three years of age, thirteen years after his announcing himself as a prophet, during the reign of Heraclius in Constantinople, and Khosrou Parvis in Persia.

Mohammed was received enthusiastically at Medina; the greater part of the inhabitants made profession of Islám, and changed the name of their city from Yatreb to Medinet-al-Nabi, which signifies "the city of the prophet." The new religion had been hitherto purely doctrinal,

but now that it had obtained an establishment, forms of worship were devised, practical observances instituted, and the first mosque erected. A struggling religion is usually tolerant; Mohammed at first permitted free exercise of their religion both to the Jews and the idolatrous Arabs, nor did he begin to persecute until he despaired of their conversion.

The exiles from Mecca formed themselves into a band of freebooters; nor did their prophet deem it inconsistent with the sanctity of his character, to take the command in several plundering expeditions. Success crowned their efforts; recruits crowded from all quarters to join his banners; if victorious, his soldiers were enriched; if they fell, they believed that their souls were instantly received into paradise; there could scarcely be a creed devised, more likely to attract proselytes. So strong was the desire of plunder, or thirst of vengeance, in the mind of the exiles, that they disregarded the sanctity of the sacred month, and plundered the caravans that were journeying to Mecca. Mohammed excused them by declaring that the Meccans had forfeited all claim to protection, since they had oppossed the commands of God, and driven his prophet from their walls.

Fame spread abroad the intelligence of a rich caravan returning from Syria, for whose protection the Meccans had sent an escort of nine hundred and fifty chosen men; Mohammed resolved to attack it, though he had only three hundred and thirteen followers, of whom but two were mounted. He took post near the well of Bedr, on the Meccan road, not far from the

Red Sea; and soon saw the caravan approaching. A fierce engagement ensued, in which the Mohammedans were on the point of being routed, when their leader, feigning to be inspired by the angel Gabriel, mounted his horse, and flinging a handful of sand toward his enemies, exclaimed: "May their faces be confounded;" This simple incident decided the fate of the day; the Meccans took to flight, and the Mohammedans gained a rich booty. Henceforth, they believed themselves invincible, especially as Mohammed declared that their success was owing to a miracle: "Ye slew not," he said, "those who were slain at Bedr, but God slew "them. Neither didst thou, O Mohammed, cast "the gravel into their eyes when thou didst "seem to cast it; but God cast it, that he "might prove the true believers by a gracious "trial from himself; for God heareth and "knoweth." But on this occasion, he was guilty of still more atrocious imposture: he declared that God was wroth with him for allowing the captives to be ransomed, instead of having them put to death as the sanguinary Omar had proposed; among those prisoners, were the prophet's uncle Abbas, and his cousin Okail. A third pretended revelation regulated the distribution of the plunder; one-fifth was set apart for religious uses, one-fifth was given to the poor, and to the widows and children of those who had fallen in battle; the rest was distributed to the army, a horseman receiving double the portion of a foot soldier. Strengthened by this victory, Mohammed ventured to lay aside his pretended toleration; he banished the Jews from Medina,

and caused one of them, who had been remarkable for his hostility to the new faith, to be assassinated.

In the following year, the Meccans assembled a large army to revenge the disgrace and loss of Bedr. They gave the command of it to Abu-Sofián, whose son, Moawiyah, was afterwards Caliph; among the inferior officers was the gallant Khaled, destined, at no distant period, to be the most zealous propagator of Islámism. The hostile armies met at Ohod, a mountain near Medina; at first, the Mussulmans were victorious, but rushing forward in disorderly pursuit, they were suddenly charged by the Meccan horse, and thrown into remediless confusion. Mohammed was thrown from his horse, and severely hurt; his uncle Hamza was slain; Abu-Bekr and Omar were grievously wounded. The Meccans remained masters of the field, and disgraced themselves by brutally mutilating the dead. It is said, that the wife of Abu-Sofián having recognised the corpse of Hamza, threw herself upon it like a fury, cut off the ears and nose to ornament her dress, and tore his heart with her teeth.

Mohammed had the same resource in prosperous or adverse fortune, a new revelation; indeed, all the chapters of the Koran revealed at Medina, bear the mark and impress of imposture, for they are clearly devised to meet the circumstances of the time. On this occasion, he declared that God had given them the victory, but afterwards deprived them of it as a punishment for their avarice. Thus he expresses himself, "God had already made good unto you his

"promise, when ye destroyed them by his per-
"mission, until ye became faint-hearted, and
"disputed concerning the command of the apos-
"tle, and were rebellious; after God had shown
"you what ye desired. Some of you chose this
"present world, and others the world to
"come. * * * * Verily, they among you who
"turned their backs on the day whereon the two
"armies met each other at Ohod, Satan caused
"them to slip, by inspiring them with a passion
"for plunder: but now God hath forgiven them,
"for God is gracious and merciful." As the Meccans did not follow up their advantages, Mohammed asserted that God had confounded their devices, and saved his elect from the dangers with which they had been threatened. The two parties continued their reciprocal aggressions with unabated fury; as Mohammed and his followers were engaged in commercial pursuits, they suffered as well as the merchants of Mecca; indeed, the historians assure us, that the state of the whole Arabic peninsula, at this period, was the most horrible that could be conceived; whole tribes devoting themselves to robbery and murder. Even the women were conspicuous in these enterprises; one female, who possessed a strong castle in the north of Arabia, had plundered many caravans, and slain the merchants; at length her fortress was stormed, she became a prisoner, and was sentenced to be torn in pieces by wild camels.

Mohammed waged war not only on the Meccans, but on the Jewish tribes near Medina; the latter, having suffered very severely, applied for for aid to Mecca, and having received a mighty

auxiliary force, they advanced against their common enemy, declaring that they would discharge their arrows in concert, as if from one bow, at the great disturber of Arabia. Warned by the calamity of Ohod, Mohammed did not venture to meet his enemies in the field; he fortified Medina with a deep trench, whence this is called "the war of the Ditch," and allowed the allies to pillage the open country. He has given us in the Korán, a curious account of the alarm which prevailed in Mecca at this period: "O "true believers, remember the favour of God "towards you, when armies of infidels came against you. * * * When they came against "you, from above you, and from below you, and "when your sight became troubled, and your "hearts came even to your throats for fear, and "ye imagined of God, various imaginations. "There were the faithful tried, and made to "tremble with a violent trembling. And when "the hypocrites, and those in whose heart was "an infirmity, said, God and his prophet have "made you no other than a fallacious promise. "And when a party of them said, O inhabitants "of Yatreb, there is no place of security for "you here, wherefore return home. * * * They "had before made a covenant with God, that "they would not turn their backs; and the per-"formance of their covenant with God, shall be "examined into hereafter." The besiegers made several attempts to storm Medina, which were defeated; discord soon rose in their ranks, a fierce wind overthrew their tents, and at the end of about twenty days, they broke up their encampment, and returned to their several homes.

Liberated from danger, the first thought of the Mussulmans was vengeance; they were particularly enraged against a Jewish tribe, called "the sons of Koreidha," and on them fell the first brunt of the new war. The Jews were besieged in their strong-hold for twenty-five days, at the end of which time they surrendered, trusting that Moádh, a gallant Moslem leader, their ancient friend, would intercede with Mohammed for their pardon. But Moádh had been severely wounded in the War of the Ditch, and from that time had invariably added to his evening prayer, "O God, grant me, before I die, the "pleasure of beholding the blood of the Kora-"dhites!" When he learned that the fate of the Jews was placed at his disposal, he caused himself to be conveyed to the camp, and pronounced as sentence, that all the men should be put to death, and the women and children sold as slaves. Mohammed was so delighted with this ferocious decree, that he exclaimed: "Behold a celestial "decision, a decision which comes from the "seventh heaven!" and gave orders that it should be instantly executed. The booty taken on this occasion was immense; the portion which the prophet reserved for himself, was the arms and military stores. He thus describes the result of the expedition: "God cast into their "hearts terror and dismay; a part of them ye "slew, and a part ye made captives, and God "hath caused you to inherit their land, and their "houses, and their wealth, and a land on which "ye have not trodden, for God is Almighty." One Jew, named Salam, particularly obnoxious to Mohammed, still survived; but the pretended

prophet sent five of his emissaries, who introduced themselves into Salam's house as guests, and murdered him at his own table. This base violation of the laws of hospitality, no where so much respected as in Arabia, filled the minds of Mohammed's opponents with terror, and from this time few were found who dared openly to resist his will. Nor was this the only example Mohammed exhibited of the evil effects which increase of power had produced on his character; he began now to give the reins to his depraved passion, and to claim for himself an exemption from the moral laws that he had promulgated. He had a great number of wives, and he frequently made fresh espousals, but not satisfied with such indulgence, he became enamoured of Zeináb, the wife of Zeid, his faithful freedman. Zeid, having heard the circumstance, divorced Zeináb, but as the Arabians regarded marriages with the wives of freedmen, or adopted children, as a species of incest, Mohammed for some time hesitated to indulge his inclinations. At length he publicly married Zeinàb, and with shameless blasphemy brought forward a new revelation to justify his crime. " No crime," said he, "is to be " charged on the prophet as to what God hath " allowed him, conformable to the ordinance of " God, with regard to those who preceded him " (for the command of God is a determinate " decree), who brought the messages of God, and " feared him, and feared none besides God."

The armies of the Mussulmans were now spread over Arabia, they were to be seen on the shores of the Red Sea and the Persian gulf; some even had made incursions into Syria.

Mohammed believed that he had sufficient strength to attempt the conquest of his native city, and advanced towards Mecca at the head of a powerful army. The Meccans prepared for a desperate resistance, but fortunately terms of accommodation were proposed, which prevented the effusion of blood. It was agreed that Mohammed should retire for the present, but with permission to visit his birth-place in the following year, and that in the mean time his disciples should have permission to perform their pilgrimages to the Kaaba, on condition of bringing no warlike weapon but their swords.

On his return to Medina, Mohammed believed himself entitled to hold intercourse with the greatest potentates of the East; he, therefore, sent ambassadors to the emperors of Persia and Constantinople, and to the king of Ethiopia, inviting them to embrace his doctrines. The letter sent to the Persian despot commenced thus: "Mohammed, the son of Abd-Allah, the apostle of God, to Khosrou monarch of Persia, greeting;" when it had been read thus far, in the presence of Khosrou Parvis, he seized the letter, and tore it in pieces, exclaiming against the insolence of an unknown man, who dared to put his own name before that of a mighty monarch. When Mohammed was told of the manner in which the letter was treated, he exclaimed, "Thus may God tear his kingdom!" an expression to which subsequent events gave the credit of a prophecy. Heraclius treated the message with more respect, but contented himself with sending a civil reply; the king of Ethiopia is said to have expressed some anxiety to become a convert.

Determined to complete the extirpation of the Jews, whom Mohammed had long regarded as his most inveterate enemies, he led his army against the mountain-fortress of Khaibar, where the Jews, driven from Medina, had found refuge. The resistance was such as might be expected from men hopeless of mercy, but the desperate valour of Ali bore down all opposition, and the fortress was taken by storm. Immense treasures rewarded the conquerors of Khaibar; but Mohammed personally had little reason to rejoice in his success, for poison was administered to him by one of the female captives, from the effects of which he never completely recovered.

On the return of the army to Medina, Mohammed showed another example of daring blasphemy, by inventing a pretended revelation to excuse his crimes. His lustful excesses became known to his wives, whose complaints created general scandal. Mohammed asserted, that the following words came down to him from heaven: "O prophet, why holdest thou that prohibited "which God hath allowed thee, seeking to please "thy wives; since God is inclined to forgive and "be merciful?" He also declared, that the following divine message was sent to his wives: "O "wives of the prophet, if ye join against him, "verily God is his patron; and Gabriel and the "good man among the faithful, and the angels "also are his assistants. If he divorce you, his "Lord can easily give him in exchange, other "wives better than you, women resigned unto "God, true believers, devout, penitent, obedient."

At length the period arrived for Mohammed's return to Mecca; his march thither resembled a

triumphal procession, the numerous hosts of converts accompanied him, with glittering arms and banners displayed; he was himself mounted on a superb camel, decorated with rich housing, while one of his officers proclaimed before him: "Give "way, give way, ye children of the infidels; the "prophet has come to triumph over you; with "a blow of his mace he will dash you to pieces!" Those of the Meccans who had been remarkable for their hostility to the Mussulmans, either shut themselves up in their houses, or fled to the mountains; the young and the ambitious hastened to join the religion which they saw was destined to triumph; and among the converts were Amru, the future conqueror of Egypt, and Kháled, to whose fiery valour was owing the defeat of the Mohammedans at Ohod. Having performed his pilgrimage, Mohammed prepared to take vengeance for the death of one of his ambassadors, who had been slain on the road to Bosrah, by the Greek governor of Muta, a town towards the south of the Red Sea. The command of the army was given to Zeid, with the following directions: "If you are slain, the command will "pass to Jaafar, the son of Abu-Thaleb; should "Jaafar fall, he shall be replaced by Abd-Allah, "the son of Kawah; but if Abd-Allah perish, "the soldiers shall name their chief." In the first engagement at Muta, the three generals thus named, were slain; Kháled was then unanimously called by the soldiers to take the lead, and his judicious measures ensured them a decisive victory. Mohammed rewarded Kháled with the title of "the Sword of God," he honoured the remains of the fallen with a magnificent funeral, and

showed especial regret for the loss of the faithful Zeid.

The peace between Mohammed and the Meccans proved, as might have been expected, nothing better than a hollow truce; both parties speedily prepared for war, but the Meccans soon saw that effective resistance was hopeless. Khâled entered the city at the head of his troops, and punished a slight opposition by an indiscriminate massacre. This unnecessary bloodshed grieved Mohammed; when he arrived at his native city, he limited his vengeance to the punishment of about a dozen persons, who had been the chief cause of his long exile. He made his entry into Mecca, as a pilgrim rather than a conqueror, reciting a chapter which he pretended had been revealed long before: "Verily "we have granted thee a manifest victory, that "God may forgive thee thy preceding and thy "subsequent sin, and may complete his favour "on thee, and direct thee in the right way, and "that God may assist thee with a glorious assis-"tance."* His first care was to destroy all the idols of the Kaaba; accompanied by his followers, he entered the temple, and laying his hand on each image in succession, said, "Truth has come, let falsehood disappear," on which the idol was broken to pieces.

Having purified the Kaaba, Mohammed resolved to extirpate idolatry in the neighbouring districts, but encountered a fiercer opposition than he had anticipated. At the battle of Honein his forces were on the brink of utter

* This passage is still frequently inscribed on the standards of the Mussulmans.

ruin, and were only saved by the impetuosity of the enemy, who broke their ranks to urge forward the pursuit, and thus exposed themselves to an attack in flank, from some troops that Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, had rallied. At this critical moment Mohammed had recourse to the expedient which proved so successful at Bedr, he flung a handful of sand towards the hostile lines, exclaiming, "May their faces be covered with confusion!" and then urged his followers to charge; this movement was decisive, the idolaters were completely defeated. Mohammed, as was his custom, declared that their success was miraculous, and thus speaks of it, in the last of his pretended revelations: "Now "hath God assisted you in many engagements, "and particularly at the battle of Honein; "when ye pleased yourselves in your multitudes, "but it was no manner of advantage unto you, "and the earth became too strait for you, not-"withstanding it was spacious; then did ye "retreat and turn your backs. Afterwards God "sent down his security upon his apostle, and "upon the faithful, and sent down troops of "angels, which ye saw not; and he punished "the unbelievers." The Mussulmans followed up their success by laying siege to Tayef, but the city was obstinately defended, and after remaining twenty days before its walls, they were forced to retire.

With part of the immense booty taken in this expedition, Mohammed purchased new allies among the Arabs, who still preserved some inclination for idolatry. The favour he showed the new converts, offended the Ansarians, or

"Defenders," as those were called who had joined him at Medina; but, having heard of their complaints, he addressed to them an affectionate remonstrance, which he concluded with the prayer, "May God have mercy on the Ansarians, and the sons of the Ansarians;" the Medinese at these words shouted for joy, and returned to their tents more devoted to the prophet than ever.

From Mecca Mohammed returned to Medina, where he was received with transports of joy, the more especially as the Medinese had dreaded that he would take up his residence in his native city. Ambassadors came from every part of Arabia to felicitate him on his victories, whole tribes became converts to his doctrines, and he found himself sufficiently strong to carry his arms beyond the peninsula. The power of the Persians was broken down; the provinces of Arabia which had been tributary to them and the Abyssinians had recovered their independence; but the Greeks, or as they are more frequently called, the Romans of the Eastern empire, were formidable foes. Mohammed had learned that the Byzantine court, jealous of his rising greatness, was preparing to attack him, and he took the daring resolution of instantly commencing the war. Having levied an immense army, he marched to the borders of Syria, but meeting with no enemy he came back to complete the extirpation of idolatry in Arabia. In the full consciousness of power, he proclaimed, that all who did not forsake their idols and embrace Islám within four months, should be exterminated; he even inserted the persecuting edict

in the Korán: " A declaration from God and his " apostle to the people, on the day of the greater " pilgrimage, that God is clear of the idolaters, " and his apostle also. * * * * When the months, " wherein ye are not allowed to attack them, " shall be passed, kill the idolaters, wheresoever " ye shall find them, and take them prisoners, and " besiege them, and lay wait for them in every " convenient place. But, if they shall repent " and observe the appointed times of prayer, " and pay the legal alms, dismiss them freely, for " God is gracious and merciful." The time had now arrived for the pilgrimage to Mecca, the last in which Mohammed was destined to bear a part; as if with some presentiment of approaching dissolution, he took every care to make this the most splendid ceremonial that had ever been witnessed in Mecca. A brief outline of the forms he observed on this occasion, deserves to be given, for they are the rules by which pilgrims to Mecca are at this day guided. On his arrival at Mecca, he purified himself by bathing, and then, proceeding to the temple, kissed the black stone, which is supposed to contain the covenant between God and man. He then made the circuit of the Kaaba seven times, running round it thrice, and four times marching with a grave and measured pace. Leaving the town, he then proceeded to the hill of Safa, and facing the Kaaba, he exclaimed, " God is great, there is no " God but God; he hath no companions: to Him " belong might and majesty: praised be his holy " name! There is no God but God." He repeated the same prayer at the hill of Merva, and the other sacred stations; after which he declared

that he received from heaven his last revelation : "This day have I perfected your religion for "you, and completed my mercy upon you, and "I have chosen Islám to be your religion." He then sacrificed sixty-three camels, one for each year of his age, and liberated the same number of slaves. During this visit he revived the old Arabic method of computation by lunar years, abolishing the intercalation by which the Koreish had endeavoured to adapt the solar to the lunar year; and he declared, that unbelievers should no longer be protected by the sanctity of the sacred months.* He enforced both these changes by a pretended revelation, saying in the Korán: "Moreover the complete number of months "with God is twelve months, which were or-"dained in the book of God, on the day whereon "he created the heavens and the earth. * * * "This is the right religion, therefore deal not "unjustly with yourselve therein, but attack the "idolaters in all the months, as they attack "you in all, and know that God is with them "that fear him."

On his return to Medina, Mohammed was seized with a disease, which he feared would be dangerous, if not mortal; even under the pressure of sickness he was not regardless of the craft, which mingles so strangely with enthusiasm and insanity, rendering it an insuperable difficulty, in the tangled web of human motives, to discover where delusion ends, and imposture begins. Assembling his wives together, he re-

* With similar perversity the Russian clergy declared that Peter the Great's attempt to introduce the Gregorian calendar was a daring impiety.

quested that Ayesha, on whose prudence he could rely, should be his only attendant during his sickness, for he feared that in some paroxysm of disease he might make some indiscreet avowal, fatal to his pretensions. Though the violence of the fever daily increased, he did not for a moment lose sight of his political interests; at this time, his attention was engaged by two impostors, who had appeared in Arabia, and like him claimed to be prophets. Of these, the one named Moseilama, appeared in the province of Yamáma, where also in a later age the sect of the Wahabees originated; the other called Aswad, resided in Yemen or Arabia Felix. Aswad was assassinated shortly before the prophet's death, and Moseilama did not long survive him.

Notwithstanding the severity of his illness, Mohammed preserved the consistency of his character: "No prophet before me," said he to his friends, "has suffered what I suffer; but the "more bitter is my pain, the greater will be my "reward hereafter." And at another time he said, "The Lord gives his servants the choice of two "worlds; I have chosen that which is to come." While his strength permitted, he insisted on performing the ceremonies of public worship in the mosque; at the conclusion of the prayers, he addressed the congregation in the following terms: "Men and brethren, if I have caused any "of you to be struck unjustly, here is my back, "let him retaliate; if I have slandered any one, "let him now assail my reputation; if I have "wronged any one, behold my purse." One of the congregation claimed an old debt of three drachmas, which Mohammed instantly paid, say-

ing " I would rather blush in this world, than in that which is to come." He then gave liberty to all his slaves, and proceeded to urge his last recommendations on his followers. He insisted, principally, on three particulars, the abolition of idolatry in Arabia, the ready reception of proselytes, and the steady observance of prayer at the stated time. He concluded by pronouncing a bitter curse upon the Jews, probably, because he attributed his illness to the poison that had been adminstered to him at Khaibar by the captive Jewess.

When the symptoms of dissolution began to appear, he ordered his family to be assembled round his bed, to hear his final directions respecting his funeral; " when I am dead," said he, " and my body has been washed and shrouded, " you will place my corpse at the verge of the " tomb, until Gabriel and the other angels of " God come to pray for my repose. You shall " then approach one by one, and pray that God " may be gracious to my departed spirit, and " afterwards you may admit the people. My " peace I bestow upon all here present, and I " charge you to give it in my name to those who " are absent; I take you, also, to witness that I " bequeath my benediction to all those who shall " follow me in the true faith, henceforth and for " ever."

Soon after this, when several of his friends were together in his apartment, he demanded pen and ink, for the purpose of writing a new Korán. The proposal gave rise to a scene of unseemly contention, some insisting that his desires should be gratified, others asserting that the Korán they

had already was sufficient. With some difficulty the room was cleared, and no strangers were again admitted. On the day of his death, he bathed his hands in water, exclaming, "O God, fortify my soul against the terrors of death." Soon after, he became quite faint. His last feeble words were "O God——yes——with my fellow citizen on high" a name he frequently gave to the angel Gabriel. Mohammed died on the 8th of June, A. D. 632, at the age of sixty-three years, during the last twenty-three of which, he had assumed the character of a prophet.

The following is the traditionary account of the circumstances of Mohammed's death, received as authentic by orthodox Mussulmans: "When his majesty (Mohammed) was ill, the "archangel Gabriel came to him and said, "Verily, God hath sent me to you, to honour "and venerate you; and this is especially for "you; God asks you about the thing which "he knows better than you, and says, how do "you feel yourself?' His majesty said, 'O "Gabriel, I feel myself sorrowful and sad.' "After that, Gabriel came a second time, and "said the same as on the first; and his majesty "answered him as before. After that he came "a third day, and said as on the first and second; "and his majesty gave the like answer; and "there was an angel along with him called "Ismail, who commands one hundred thousand "angels, and every one of them commands one "hundred thousand more. And Ismail asked "permission to come to his majesty; and his "majesty asked Gabriel about him, who said, "'This is such and such an angel.' After that

"Gabriel said, 'The angel of death, Azrael, asks "leave to come to any man before you, nor will "he to any one after you.' Then his majesty "said 'give him leave.' Then the angel of death "came in, and made a salám to his majesty; and "then said. 'Verily, God hath sent me to you, "O Mohammed! and if you order me I shall "take your pure soul, but if you order me to let it "alone, I will do so.' Then his majesty said, "'Do you take my soul, O angel of death?' He "said, 'yes, I have been ordered to do so, and also "to obey you.' Then his majesty looked at "Gabriel, who said, 'O Mohammed! verily, "God is desirous of meeting you.' Then the "prophet said to the angel of death, 'Do what "you have been ordered.' Then the angel took "his soul——And when his majesty died, an "order of patience came: the companions "heard a voice from the corner of the house, "saying, 'Peace be with you, O people of the "house of the prophet and the compassion and "blessing of God; verily, having hope in God's "rewards, and bearing patiently every misfortune "and loss is beneficial to you; then put faith in "God, and no other, and hope from him, and no "other; and only the despairer of the rewards is "unfortunate.' Then Ali-Zain said, 'Do ye "know who that man is? he is Kedher." —(See "page 31.*)

The news of his death filled Medina with confusion; many, but especially Omar, declared that he still lived, and Abu-Bekr had some difficulty to calm the tumult by reading those passages of the Korán in which the prophet asserted his

* See the *Mischat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. iii., 738.

mortality. Three days elapsed before Abu-Bekr was appointed his successor, with the title of Khaliph or vicar. The body was then prepared for interment in the manner that he had himself directed. After which his grave was dug, under the bed where he expired. After some years a mosque was erected over the spot, to which pious Mussulmans still perform pilgrimage. The absurd tale of his body having been placed in an iron coffin, and held suspended in the air by magnetic influence, is a mere falsehood; but we have vainly endeavoured to trace its parentage.

We have thus given a sketch of the career of this extraordinary man; we have trusted chiefly to the authority of those Mussulmans, who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth,* and we have paid particular attention to the Korán, which may be regarded in some degree as a piece of auto-biography. It seems to us, after long and serious consideration, that the original intentions of Mohammed were good; his first object was to substitute a pure religion for the idolatry that prevailed in Mecca, and with this was probably mingled the meaner, but still the not unworthy design, of uniting the Arabian tribes into one people, and establishing the independence of the peninsula. His first step in imposture was probably what is mischievously termed "a pious fraud," but success led him to repeat the artifice, and he soon learned to place his chief reliance on

* Tabari and Abulfeda are the best Oriental authorities; use has also been made of the great collection of traditions, called *Mischcat-ul Mās'abih,* we have also consulted the lives of Mohammed, by Prideaux, Gagnior and Reinaud, and Von Hammer's articles in *Les Mines de l'Orient.*

deception. Yet the consciousness of original good intentions seems never to have deserted him; the hour of death would have shaken one who was wholly an impostor, we have seen that Mohammed met it with courage and confidence. The leading doctrines of Islám were arranged before the flight from Mecca, the subsequent additions made to them at Medina were corruptions of their purity. The union of fanaticism and cunning is by no means rare; but when they meet in the same individual, they are so closely intertwined, that the best mental analyst is unable to separate them. Who, indeed, can accurately determine the composition of the mixed motives that influence his own actions?

To the character of Mohammed as a legislator and conqueror, it may be interesting to add some few traits of his private life and conversation. His person was well formed, his aspect commanding, and his port that of one who knew himself to be capable of great things. His temper was well regulated, his manners affable, and his general conversation full of point. Though usually grave, he frequently condescended to jest both with his disciples and those whom he casually met. One day an old woman asked him to ensure her admission to Paradise; he replied, "Paradise was not made for old women," but, seeing that she wept, he added, "God, before "their admission, will restore to the aged youth "and beauty."

So great was his liberality to the poor, that he frequently left his household unprovided; nor did he content himself with relieving their wants, he entered into conversation with them, and ex-

pressed a warm sympathy for their sufferings, which is to the wretched a boon frequently more grateful than charitable relief. In the domestic cricle he was deservedly beloved; Zeid while yet a slave, refused to receive freedom, if it would have the effect of separating him from so indulgent a master. He was a firm friend and a faithful ally; his soldiers were enthusiastic in their attachment to his person, the Medinese regarded him as second only to the Divinity.

We have now to contemplate the dark side of the picture; he was the slave of licentious passions, which seemed to strengthen with his age; notwithstanding the number of his wives and concubines, he was intensely jealous, and even devised a revelation, forbidding intrusions on his privacy; nay, his jealousy passed the bounds of mortal fate, for the Korán expressly prohibits his wives from marrying after his decease. Vindictive as the Arabs are, Mohammed's vengeful spirit could scarcely be paralleled in the peninsula; he never forgave an offence, unless when the indulgence of revenge would have been impolitic. Once an Arab, who had incurred his displeasure, knelt before him, entreating pardon: Mohammed remained silent, hoping that his attendants would, by a speedy assassination of the suppliant, save him from the shame of a refusal. None of them stirred, and the man was dismissed in safety. After his departure, Mohammed reproved them for not having slain one whose pardon was not granted on the instant: they answered that he had made no sign, to which he angrily replied, "It should not be necessary "for a prophet to make a sign."

The eloquence of Mohammed, judging from the fragments preserved by tradition, and most chapters of the Korán, was manly and energetic, mingled with no small share of a poetical spirit.* We regard his asserted want of education as very dubious; it served his purpose to attribute his knowledge of reading and writing to a miracle, but without some portion of these qualifications, he could scarcely have succeeded as a merchant in Syria, or have been chosen as a factor by Khadijah. He was gifted with a powerful memory, he possessed taste superior to that of his times, he had improved his mind by foreign travel, and there is no improbability in the supposition, that part of his time in the caves of mount Hira, was devoted to literary studies. He seems to have had little regard for consistency, and changed or modified his institutions without scruple. Thus in the beginning of his career, hoping to gain the Jews, he had adopted several Jewish ceremonies, which he subsequently changed, when he found that people obstinately attached to the creed of their fathers. In these matters, he followed no other guide than his interests and his passions. Hence the Mussulman doctors of law are careful to note in the Korán, the precepts that have been abrogated.

Yet, though the failings of Mohammed were notorious, his disciples who absolutely witnessed them, and his followers, who find them recorded in the Korán, firmly believe in his impeccability. Men have in all ages been found, who adhered to inconsistent dogmas; those who believe at once the innocence of Mohammed, and the tradi-

* See Appendix on the Korán.

tions that assert his guilt, only afford a new example of the aberrations to which the mind is subject, when once it quits the safe anchorage of revealed truth.

The followers of Mohammed attribute to him the power of working miracles, notwithstanding his express declaration to the contrary; of these they enumerate several thousands, but only four derive any support from the Korán; these are the night-journey to heaven, the angelic auxiliaries at the battles of Bedr and Honein, and the cleaving of the moon asunder.*

The very defects, however, in the character of Mohammed, were probably among the causes of his success in his age and nation; his enthusiastic countrymen were ever ready to adopt religious innovations, and time has not changed their dispositions. It is notorious, that the Wahabees encountered little or no resistance from the Mussulmans of Arabia, and that without the interference of the Turks, Islamism would have been annihilated in the very country that was the cradle of its glory.

* The tradition respecting this miracle is founded on the following verse of the Korán. "The hour of judgment approacheth, and the moon hath been split asunder." Ebn Masúd affirmed that this miracle was literally performed, and that he saw mount Hará interposed between the two sections. A very childish version of the tale is given by Gagnier and repeated by Critchton; in which, among other absurdities, it is mentioned, that the moon went up one of Mohammed's sleeves, and came down the other. The most approved commentators say, that the preterite is here, according to a well-known Oriental idiom, used for the future; and that this is a prediction of the signs that shall precede the resurrection. Some authors believe that Mohammed took advantage of an eclipse, and pretended that the moon was darkened by his miraculous powers.

CHAPTER III.

THE MOHAMMEDAN CREED; FROM AN ORIGINAL ARABIC CONFESSION OF FAITH.

THE Creed of which the following is a translation, was originally compiled by a Mohammedan doctor of the law, who belonged to the Sonnite sect, and contains a summary of the doctrines generally received by orthodox Mussulmans; it was published in 1705, by Adrian Reland, with a Latin translation, unfortunately too literal for general use, and from the Latin it was translated into English and French. Hottinger, who edited the creed in Hebrew characters, declared that there were in it, "precepts, Ethical, Political, and Domestic, worthy of Christianity itself." The brevity of this creed, renders it necessary to add notes, explaining more fully the different articles, more especially those which are founded on the orthodox traditions, and the authoritative commentaries on the Korán.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST MERCIFUL.—Praise be unto God, who has led us unto the Faith*, and has appointed it as a signet† by which

* *Imán*, faith, was declared by Mohámmed, to be the key of Paradise. The following definition of Imán is given in the *Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, or great collection of traditions, respecting the actions and sayings of Mohammed. "Moadh-ebn-Jabal, "asked the prophet of the most excellent Imán, he said, to love "him who loves God, and hate him who hates God, and to keep "your tongue employed in repeationg the name of God."—What else, O Prophet? he said, "to do unto all men what you "would wish to have done unto you, and to reject for others "what you would reject for yourself."—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 17.

† The word more usually signifies "a dowry;" and in that

is obtained the entrance of the celestial paradise; and as a veil between us and eternal dwelling in flames.* And may the favour and praise of God be upon Mohammed, the best of men, the Guide,† who leads his followers into the right

sense the meaning of the passage would be, that by faith we bind to us the "Maids of Paradise," an Eastern personification of celestial pleasures. But as the signet is, in the East, a well-known symbol of royal favour, we have adopted it as the preferable signification.

* Abú-Horeira (a companion of Mohammed, whose name, signifying *the father of a cat*, was given him from his attachment to that animal,) reports the following tradition: "The "prophet said, Verily, a dead body sits up in its grave without "fear or noise, after which it is asked its religion in the world; "it will reply, 'I was in Islàm.'—'And what dost thou say "concerning Mohammed?'—It will say, 'He is the messenger "of God, who brought wonders to us from God, and I consider "him a teller of truth.'—'And didst thou see God?'—It will "say, 'It is not possible for any man to see God.'—Then an "opening will be made for it towards hell, to see some tearing "others to pieces in flames; then it will be told, 'Look towards "that from which God hath guarded thee:' after which an "opening will be made for it towards Paradise, and it will see "its beauties and pleasures, and it will be told, 'This is the place "of thy abode, because thou livedst in the truth, and diedst in "it, and God will raise thee up in it!' And a bad man will sit "in his grave in lamentation and wailing. Then he will be "asked, 'What he did!' he will say, 'I know not'—'But what "dost thou say concerning Mohammed?'—He will say, 'I heard "something about him.' For him then will be opened a crevice "towards Paradise, and he will look at its beauties, and will be "told, 'Look at those things which are withheld from thee;' "then a hole will be opened for him "towards hell, and he "will see its wailing and gnashing of teeth, and will be told, "'This is thy abode, because thou livedst in doubt, and will be "raised up in doubt, God willing.'"—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 43.

† This epithet was first bestowed upon Mohammed by Abu-Bekr; the fourth convert to the faith of the prophet.

way—favour, perpetual and ever-increasing, from generation to generation.

Here begins the description of Faith and its explanation. Know that Faith is the foundation of Islamism,* as the prophet Mohammed has pronounced, to whom may God be kind, and grant plenary salvation. Islamism rests on five foundations; of which the first is the Confession of God, that there is no other God beside him, and that Mohammed is his delegated prophet;†

* *Islam*, means, as has been mentioned before, "resignation to the will of God," or, "a state of salvation;" but the former is the meaning recognised by the majority of the Mohammedan writers. It is divided into two parts, theoretical, and practical. The former consists of, 1st, belief in God; 2nd, his angels; 3rd, in his scripture; 4th, in his prophets; 5th, in the resurrection; and 6th, in predestination. The four points of practice, 1st, prayers and purifications; 2nd, alms; 3rd, fasting; and 4th, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

† Allusion is made to the passages in the Bible, which were quoted by Mohammed as predictions of his mission. Moses says, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, "from the midst of thee, *of thy brethren*, like unto me, unto "him shall you hearken."—*Deut.* xviii. 15. The prophet here foretold, must, say the Mussulmans, have descended from Ishmael, the brother of Isaac; an interpretation that need not be refuted. A more celebrated misapplication of Scripture is, his claim to be recognised as the Comforter, promissd by Jesus Christ; the Islamite doctors assert, that the Christians have here wilfully perverted the text, and substituted παρακλητος, *a Comforter*, for the word περικλυτος, *most famous*; which has the same signification as the name Mohammed. This is absurdly false; the name *a Paraclete*, was familiar to the Jews, and adopted into their language from the time that Palestine became subject to the Seleucidæ, and was used in a forensic sense, to signify the person who pleaded in defence of a criminal, before a public tribunal. In this sense it is used, 1 John ii. 1, "If any "man sin, we have an advocate (παρακλητον) with the Father, "Jesus Christ the righteous." Nor was this the only forensic

the second is, the offering up of prayer* at stated periods; the third, the bestowing of alms; the fourth, fasting during the month Ramadan; and the fifth, is the pilgrimage to Mecca, which every person possessing the power is bound to perform. But this is the confession which we call Faith.

Be it known, that every person possessing capacity for it,† is bound to believe in God—in his angels—in his books—in his prophets—in the last day, and in the absolute decree and predetermination of the Most Highest, respecting both good and evil.

But Faith consists in this, that every man is persuaded in his soul of the truth of these things, and Confession is the proof of this belief by external indications.

term which the Jews derived from the Greeks in the age of the Seleucidæ; we find also in the Targumists and Talmudists, the word an accuser from the Greek κατηγορος.

It was long disputed among the learned, why the great Persian heresiarch assumed the name of Mani or Manes, and why his followers asserted, that this name proved him to be the promised Comforter. Archbishop Usher has completely explained both difficulties, though the circumstance seems not to be generally known; he has shown that Mani in Persian, and Manes in Greek, is precisely the same as the Hebrew Menahem, or rather Menachem "a Comforter." This also explains the reason why the Manichees rejected the Acts of the Apostles; the account of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, completely destroyed the pretensions of Mani to be the promised Paraclete, or Comforter.

* This includes washing and purification.

† "Abú-Horeira says, that the prophet of God said, "I swear "by God, that my soul is in his hands; whoever hath heard of "my prophecy without believing in my religion, and hath died, "will be among the companions of the fire, (devils and condemned spirits,) although he shall have been a Jew or a "Christian."—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih,* vol. i. 3.

OF FAITH IN GOD.

FAITH in God, is the real belief in the soul, and confession by the tongue, that God* is a supreme existence, true, permanent†, a very essence, eternal, without beginning and without end, who has no form‡ or figure, is limited by no place, has no equal, compeer, or similarity, no motion or change; no separation, division, weariness, or casualty. He is removed from conjunction with any other being, self-existent, intelligent, potent, of independent volition, hearing all our words, seeing all our deeds, the source of speech, the maker, the creator, the sustainer, the producer, the author of life and death;§ giving a beginning to all things, causing to all a resurrection; judging, decreeing, correcting, ruling, prohibiting, directing to rectitude and leading to error; a retributive judge, rewarding, punishing, merciful, victorious.

And these attributes are eternally inherent in his essence throughout all ages—without separation or change; and these attributes are not HE,

* The Mohammedan commentators on the Korán enumerate ninety names of God, divided into three classes; the first relates to his essence, the second to his dignity, and the third to his attributes.

† "Abú-Horeira said, that the prophet of God related these "words of God. 'The sons of Adan vex me and abuse time; "whereas I am time itself, in my hands are all events, I have "made the day and the night.'"—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 9.

‡ The attributes of God are divided by the Shiites into affirmative and negative, which they always carefully distinguish; the Sonnites are less careful in this particular.

§ The use of formative letters to express those shades of meaning in verbs, for which the Western languages use qualifying adverbs, renders it difficult to translate these epithets without weakening their force by a paraphrase.

nor yet are they different from him. And thus every attribute is conjoined with him, as life with knowledge, or knowledge with power.*

But these are the attributes,† life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, sight, the power of communication,‡ eternity both as regards a beginning and an end, action, creation, support, production, formation, the gift of life, the message of death, the first origin of things, their restoration, wisdom, predestination, direction to good, seduction to evil,§ retribution, reward, punishment, grace and victory.

And with these noble and precious attributes, God, the Most Highest, is endowed; and whoever denies any of these attributes, or doubts concerning them, or any of them, is doubtlessly an infidel.

Preserve us, O God, from the sin of infidelity!

OF ANGELS.

For a right belief concerning angels, there is required a persuasion of the mind and confession of the tongue, that there exist servants to the

* It is rather curious to find an Arabian writer, who never heard of Lord Bacon, assuming the celebrated Baconian aphorism that "knowledge is power," as an illustration.

† The Mussulman rosary consists of niety-nine small and one large bead, with each of the ninty-nine an attribute of deity is recited, and with the last, the word "Allah," God. The nine first versicles may serve as a specimen; 1, Gracious; 2, Merciful; 3, King; 4, Holy; 5, Saviour; 6, Protector; 7, Defender; 8, August; 9, Absolute Sovereign, &c.—*Hidayút-ŭl-Islám*, Calcutta, 1804.

‡ Literally "language," but the Arabic word includes revelation and every other mode of communicating intelligence.

§ The eighty-ninth and ninetieth versicles of the Mohammedan Rosary are, 89, "O thou who avertest evil;" 90, "O thou who permittest evil to come."—*Hidayút-ŭl-Islám.*

supreme God who are called Angels or messengers, free from sin, near to God, who perform all his commands, and are never disobedient. But they have pure and subtile bodies, created of fire; neither is there among them any difference of sexes, or carnal appetites, and they have neither father nor mother. Also they are endowed with different forms, and severally preside over ministration. Some stand, some incline downwards, some sit, or adore with a lowered forehead; others sing hymns and praises of God, or laud and extol their Creator, or ask pardon for human offences.* Some of them record the deeds of men, and guard over the human race; others support the throne of God, or go about it, and perform other works which are pleasing to the Deity.

But it is necessary to believe in them. although a person may not know their names or specific attributes;† and to embrace them in love, is one of the necessary conditions of faith. And to hate them collectively or individually, is an act of infidelity.

But if any one confesses that angels exist, but asserts that they have sexual differences, it is an

* Hence the angels are sometimes collectively named intercessors.

† The following are the principal allusions made to angels in the Korán, "God maketh the angels his messengers, furnished "with two, three, or four pair of wings:"—chap. xxxv. "The "angels who are in the presence of God, do not insolently "disdain his service, neither are they tired therewith. They "praise him night and day: they faint not:"—chap. xxi. "Each man hath angels mutually succeeding each other, "before him and behind him; they watch him by the command "of God:"—chap. xiii. "Every soul hath a guardian set "over it:"—chap. lxxxvi.

act of infidelity. Or if he confess that there are angels, and that they have no sexual differences, but declares that he does not repose trust in them, or love them, he is to be esteemed an infidel.

Preserve us, O God, from the sin of infidelity.

OF THE DIVINE BOOKS.

FAITH in the books of God is this, that we are persuaded in our mind, and confess with our tongue, that those illustrious books are from God, which he sent down from heaven to his prophet; which demission was made without creation,* (the Koran is) eternal† without pro-

* Abú-Horeira said, "I heard from the prophet, verily God "disclosed the chapters entitled T. H. (the 20th), and Y. S, (the "36th), before creating the regions and the earth by one thousand "years; and when the angels heard them, they said 'Happy "be the tribe to which the Korán shall be sent down. and hap-"py be the tongues which speak it.'"—*Mischcat*, &c., vol. i. 507. It is remarkable that neither in the Korán itself, nor in the authentic traditions, can we find any allusion made to its eternity. This article of faith was probably derived from the Jews, many of whose rabbins have asserted the eternal existence of the Pentateuch.—*Rab. Coll.* vi. 71.

† Whether the Korán was created, or eternal, continues to be still a fierce subject of contention among the Mohammedan Theologians. For asserting the former opinion, the Caliph Vathek was stigmatized as an infidel, and sentenced to unenviable immortality, both in the East and West, as the worst of tyrants and sinners. Abu Yacoub relates a curious account of a public controversy on the subject between Shafai, the poet and theologian, and Hafs a secterian preacher at Bagdad. Hafs asserted that the Korán was created at the moment of its revelation. Shafaí quoted the verse, "God said *be*, and it was," and asked, "did not God create all things by the word *be*?" Hafs assented—"If then the Korán was created, must not the word *be* have been created with it?" Hafs could not deny so plain a proposition, "Then," said Shafaí, "all things, accordings to you, were created by a created being, which is a gross inconsistency and manifest impiety." Hafs was reduced to

duction. In them are contained the commands and prohibitions of God—his edicts—his promises, and his threatenings—his declaration of what is lawful, and what is unlawful—the distinction between obedience and rebellion—and his information of his retributive justice, both as regards rewards and punishments. All these books are the very word of God, the Most Highest, which is read by the tongue, guarded in the volumes, and written in the hearts of men. But this Word of God is distinct from those letters and vocal sounds, and yet, these letters and vocal sounds are metaphorically called the Word of God, because they indicate God's real word. In the same way that we call our expressions—our words, because they indicate what is truly our word. As the poet says:

Our real language dwells within our breasts,
The tongue is but an index of the heart.

These things God well knows.

The books are one hundred and four in number; of which God, the Most Highest, sent down ten to Adam*—fifty to Seth†—thirty to

silence, and such an effect had Shafaí's logic on the audience, that they put Hafs to death as a pestilent heretic.

Shafaí was the founder of one of the four orthodox sects, and was so celebrated by the Sonnites, that his presence was said to be "like the sun to the world, or health to the body."

* Some Western writers, and among others the celebrated Orientalist, Hottinger, have stated the number revealed to Adam as twenty-one. The mistake has arisen from one of the Arabic traditions, stating that twenty-one leaves or tablets were, at the beginning, revealed to Adam, from which the first of the ten books was formed.

† Seth is a favourite hero in the theological romances of the Orientals;

"The tablets that of old
By Seth were from the Deluge sav'd,"

Idris*—ten to Abraham—one to Moses, which is the Thorah, (Law) or Pentateuch;† one to Issa, (Jesus,) which is the Engil, (Evangelium, or Gospel;) one to David, and this is the book of Psalms; and one to Mohammed‡, which is

have been mentioned by Christian writers, and both the Syrians and Curds pretend to have copies of his revelations. Some of the more modern Moslemite doctors understand by the word books, communications made to Seth by the Deity, which were not committed to writing; but the more orthodox declare it would be absurd to suppose that the name of books would be given to unwritten revelations.

* Edris or Idris is one of the Mohammedan appellations of the prophet Enoch: it is derived from a word signifying intelligence or study, according to some, because he was the first natural philosopher, according to others, because he was an excellent tailor and could make a coat in a day! The elements of all the physical sciences were said to be contained in the revelations made to him, and by the ordinary corruptions of tradition he is supposed to have been the first author of astrology, geomancy, and other magical arts. He is a favourite hero with the writers of romance, who describe him as the first author of religious wars, and the first who inculcated the duty of persecuing infidels.—See Chap. I.

† The Mohammedans, however, deny that the Pentateuch or Gospels, as we have them, are genuine; but assert that they have been grossly corrupted by the Jews and Christians. Of these corruptions they assign several specific instances; the passage in the Psalms, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," should be according to them, "Thou art my prophet, this day has I instructed thee." It is easy to see that these allegations were after-thoughts devised by the later Mohammedan doctors, when pressed too hard by the advocates of Christianity. It is curious that Ben Batrik declares that Saint Mark's Gospel was originally written in Latin, and Saint Matthew's in Hebrew, The Greek version of the former he attributes to Saint Peter, and of the latter to Saint John.

‡ The following, according to tradition, is the account Mohammed gave of the manner in which revelations were made to him. "Jabir said, I heard his majesty (Mohammed) relating "the commencement of the instructions from above, saying,

the Forkán* (Korán.) He who denies these volumes, or doubts concerning them, or a part of them, or a chapter, or a versicle, or a word of them†, is certainly an infidel.

Preserve us, O God, from the sin of infidelity.

" 'Whilst I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven,
" and raised up my eyes; and behold, I saw the angel, who had
" come to me at the mountain of Hira, sitting upon a throne
" between the heavens and the earth: and I feared him, so
" that I fell upon the ground. Then I went home and said,
" wrap me in a cloth, wrap me in a cloth: and wrap me up.
" Then God sent this revelation, O thou wrapped up, arise
" (Korán lxxiii.), and invite men to Islám, and make them fear
" God's punishment, and know that your Lord is great, and
" clean your garments of filth, and abandon idolatry. Then,
" afterwards, the other instructions came in succession.' "—
Mischcat, vol. ii. p. 680.

* *Forkán*, that is "the discerner," or "distinguisher" between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice. This name is said to have been given to the Korán by Abu-Bekr. He also named it *Moshaf*, "The Book." The modern Mohammedans usually name it *Kelam Scherif*, "the noble word," or *Ketab Aziz*, "the precious volume." When they make a quotation from it they simply put, "God said" in a different character, and never mention the chapter or verse where the passage is found.

† The reverence of the Mohammedans for the Korán may well put Christians to the blush; on this subject, Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali makes the following judicious observations: "Out of reverence for God's holy name, always expressed in their letters, (and for fear that any passage quoted from the Korán might be desecrated,) written paper, to be destroyed, is first torn, and then washed in water, before the whole is scattered abroad; they would think it a sinful act to burn a piece of paper on which the holy name, or a passage from the Korán, has been inscribed. How often have I reflected, whilst observing this praiseworthy feature in the character of a comparatively unenlightened population, on the little respect paid to the Sacred Writings amongst a people who have had greater opportunities of acquiring wisdom and knowledge." *Mussulmans of India*, vol. ii.

There are many traditions relating to the value of the Korán, and the respect with which it should be treated, such as, that it

CONCERNING THE AMBASSADORS OF GOD.

FAITH in the ambassadors of God demands that we recognise in the heart, and confess with the tongue, that God, the Most Highest, has appointed prophets—ambassadors—chosen from among men, and sent as messengers to men—preachers of eternal truth, to whom implicit faith and confidence is due, who command and forbid certain things, (as they are inspired,) and bear to men the revealed edicts of the Deity, and make manifest to them his constitutions and decrees—the appointments he has made, and the rules he requires to be observed; and reveal to men things hidden from the powers of the natural understandings; as the nature of essence of the Divinity—the attributes—the works and operations of God—the resurrection* and revivifi-

should never beheld below the girdle, that it should be read with a modulated voice, &c. Ebn Omar adds, "I heard his "majesty forbid travelling with the Korán, lest it should be "carried to the land of the enemies of religion, who might "treat it with contempt, and destroy it."—*Mischcat-ul-Más'abih*, vol. i. 517.

* The traditions respecting the signs which Mohammed declared should precede the resurrection, vary very much. One declares him to have said, "The resurrection will not take place "until you shall see ten tokens; the first smoke (or a dense "mist), which will fill the East and West, and remain forty "days; the second DAJAL (Antichrist); the third a beast which "will come out of the mountain of *Sáfah;* the fourth the rising "of the sun in the West; the fifth, the coming down of Jesus, "the son of Mary; the sixth, the coming of GOG and MAGOG; "the seventh, a sinking of the earth in the East; the eighth, "another in the West; the ninth, another in the land of "Arabia; the tenth, a fire which will come out of the land of "Yemen, which will drive man towards a land, in which will be "the rising of the dead."—*Mischcat*, ii. 562.

It appears that the fourth sign was that which the followers of Mohammed found it most difficult to conceive, they sought additional information on the subject, and received in reply the

cation of the dead—the punishment of the sepul-

most singular lecture on astronomy that has ever been recorded. He said, "When the sun rises, he goes to prostrate himself "under God's imperial throne, and then asks permission to go "to the East, which is given him, and he is ordered to go to "the East and rise. And the time approaches when the sun "will prostrate, but it will not be approved, and he will ask leave "to go and rise in the East, but it will not be granted, and it "will be said to him, return to the place from whence you came, "as you came from the West, so also return to it, and rise "there."—*Mischcat, Ibid* . ... The traditions about Dajál (Antichrist), are very numerous. Mohammed thus described his personal appearance, "Verily he is of low stature, although bul- "ky; and has splay feet, and is blind, with his flesh even on one "side of his face, without the mark of an eye, and his other "eye is neither full, nor sunk into his head. Then if you "should have a doubt about Dajál, know that verily your "cherisher (God) is not blind."—*Mischcat*, vol. ii. 571.. ..The following explanation is given of the other principal signs of the resurrection. "Dajál will come to a tribe, and call them to "him, and they will believe in him; and Dajál will order "the sky, and rain will fall; and he will order the earth. and "it will produce verdure; and in the evening their cattle will "come to them with higher lumps upon their backs than they "went out in the morning, and their udders will be large, and "their flanks shall be full. After that Dajál will go to another "tribe, and call them, and they will refuse, and he will withhold "rain from their verdure and cultivation; and they will suffer "a famine, and possess nothing.. ... ...And whilst Dajál "will be about these things, on a sudden God will send Jesus, "son of Mary, and he will come down on a white tower, on "the east of Damascus; clothed in robes coloured with red "flowers, resting the palms of his hands upon the wings of two "angels; and every infidel will die, who shall be breathed "upon by the Messiah, and the breath of Jesus will reach as "far as eye can see. And Jesus will seek for Dajál until he "finds him at a door in a village called Lúd (in Palestine), and "will kill him. Then a tribe will come to Jesus whom God "shall have preserved from the evils of Dajál, and he will "comfort them, and will inform them of the degrees of emi- "nence they will meet with in Paradise.. .... And God "will send Gog and Magog, and they will pass lightly over "every land, high or low; and those who shall come before

chre,* and the interrogation, and the examination,

" them, will pass over the lake of Tiberias, and will drink all
" the water in it .... And Jesus and his friends will be
" forbidden to descend from the mountain of Túr (Sinai, whither
" God had commanded them to retire), until the head of one
" bullock will be worth more to them than a hundred *dinárs* is
" to you this day. And Jesus and his friends will pray for the
" destruction of God and Magog, and God will send insects into
" their necks, and they will die at once. Then Jesus and his
" companions will come down upon the earth, and they will
" not find a spot of ground unpolluted by the carcasses of the
" wicked; but God will send birds with necks like the camels
" of Khorassan, who shall destroy them. And the Mussulmans
" will burn fires of the bows, and arrows, and quiver, of Gog
" and Magog for seven years. After that, God will send rains
" over towns and forests, and the earth will be washed as if
" wept. After that, it will be said to the earth, 'Bring your
" fruit.' And in those days, from ten to forty persons shall eat
" of one pomegranate, and find shelter under its rind; and in
" those days there will be abundance of milk, so that the milk
" of one camel will fill a company of men, and the milk of a
" cow will fill a tribe, and the milk of a goat will be sufficient
" for several people. And whilst this is doing, God will send
" an odoriferous gale, which will take them under its arm, and
" will take the soul of every *Momin* (true believer), and the bad
" people will remain, who breed enmity in the earth; like asses
" fight together, and on these people the resurrection will come
" to pass."—*Mischcat*, vol. ii. 567... .... This singular tradition of Christ's personal reign on earth, his conquest over Gog and Magog, and the glories of the Millennium, were borrowed from the Syrian Christians, whose speculations on these subjects were equally numerous and absurd,—See *Ephrem Syrus;* and LEE's edition of *Martyn's Controversy*.

* When a corpse is laid in the grave, the Mohammedans believe that an angels gives notice of it to the two examiners, Mouker and Nakir: terrific angels of livid and gloomy appearance, whose duty it is to inquire into the life and actions of the deceased. They order the dead person to sit upright, and if he obeys not instantly, they drag him up with an iron hook; and as these examiners are not supposed to be very patient, the Mohammedans have their graves made hollow, in order that they may be able to sit up without difficulty. The angels rigidly question the corpse respecting his faith; if he answers

and the scale and balance*, and the bridge,† or road that must be trodden by all on the last day,

satisfactorily, they suffer him to be refreshed with the breezes of Paradise; but if not, they beat him on the temples with maces of iron, and pull him about with the iron hook or scythe until he roars so loud as to be heard by all the universe except men and gins (genii). They then thrust him back into the grave, giving him as companions ninety-nine dragons, with seven heads each, who gnaw his carcass until the day of judgment.

This extraordinary article of faith is not directly mentioned in the Korán and is therefore rejected by the sect of the Motazalites, who adhere strictly to the text. But as a distinct allusion is made to the subject, it is received by the majority of the Mohammedans.

In the Magian religion, from which this doctrine appears to be borrowed, the examination takes place at a later period: and the examiners, Mithra and Raschné-rást, wait until the souls present themselves on the bridge that separates earth from heaven.—See the *Zend-Avesta.*

The Jews have a similar belief, probably also derived from the Magians during the Babylonish captivity, and they call the examination *Chibbut Hakkeber,* the beating of the sepulchre.

* This is also an article common to the Magian, Mohammedan, and Rabbinical creeds. It was manifestly at first a sublime allegory, which tradition explained literally. The Mohammedans say that each of the scales will be sufficiently large to contain the universe, and that the balance will be held by the angel Gabriel. The books, in which the good and bad actions of a man's life are severally recorded, will be weighed, and the examination will be so nice that the weight of a hair will turn the scale.

† The bridge of Al Sirât, say the Mohammedans, leads from earth to heaven, but passes over the very centre of hell; it is finer than a hair, and sharper than a razor's edge; it is beset on both sides with briers and thorns. Over it the righteous shall pass rapidly and without impediment, but the wicked shall be hurled into the burning lake which roars beneath them. How the righteous are to be sustained, and what shall be the means of precipitating the wicked, is, however, yet, matter of dispute.

We find this dogma noticed, rather obscurely, in the Rabbinical writings; but it forms an essential doctrine of the Magian religion. According to the Magian belief, the examiners appoint-

and the fish-pool*, and paradise with its delights†,

ed by God to investigate men's actions, stand in the midst of the *Pul Tchinevad* (straight bridge), and the souls enter upon it one by one. Superior Intelligences, called Izeeds, will accompany the righteous over the dangerous pass and prevent them from tripping; but the wicked. left to themselves, shall become giddy, and terrified, and topple headlong from the steep. After the resurrection is completed, and the last judgment concluded, this bridge shall be destroyed, and no future connexion exist between the eternal delights of heaven, and the anxieties of a transitory world.—See the *Zend-Avesta*.

It must be confessed that the Magian description is at once the most complete and beautiful; but this is not the only poetical imagination of the ancient Persians that Mohammed has injured by transfusing it into the Korán.

* The pond, or fishing-pool, is designed to refresh the righteous after they have passed the bridge Al Sirât. It is described as an exact square, of a month's journey in compass. Its water is supplied by two pipes from Cawthar, or Cautser, one of the rivers of Paradise, is whiter than milk or silver, more ordoriferous than musk; the pebbles over which it rolls are diamonds and rubies, its sands are seed-pearls. Around it are as many cups as there are stars in the firmament, and whosoever tastes of its streams shall never thirst again.

Some of the modern Moslemites consider this account of the pond as allegorical.

† It is a dispute among the Mohammedans whether Paradise be now in existence, or is as yet uncreate. The more orthodox, however, adopt the former opinion. The voluptuous descriptions of the sensual pleasures to be enjoyed by the faithful, are the great stain of the Korán; still they are tame, compared with the extravagant account of the commentators, who, like the Jewish Rabbies, give the amplest reins to imagination whenever they can obtain an opportunity. We must not, however, suppose that the Mohammedans believe sensual pleasures to be the only or even the chief delights of heaven; these, they assert, will arise from the fruition of the Divine presence, and a share in the illuminating influence of the Eternal; and the eight degrees of beautitude that they described, are measured by the proximity of the soul to the Deity.

The commentators who dwell on the sensual delights of Paradise, confound the future residence of the blessed not only with the garden of Eden, bnt with the garden of Irám, planted

and hell* with its punishments. But the prophets are free from errors and great sins, and all

by the impious Schedad, who endeavoured to pass himself off as a deity, and introduced some of his disciples to the garden, which he had prepared with all possible luxuries, under the pretence of giving them a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

It is a common, but erroneous, tradition, that Mohammed excluded females from Paradise; there is no better authority for it, than an indifferent jest attributed to the prophet: an aged woman having plagued him on the subject of Paradise, he said that she had no concern with the matter, for no old woman would be admitted into it; but seeing that she was grieved by this announcement, he said that all the old women would be restored to youth before their admission into the regions of bliss.

D'Herbelot attributes the plan of the Mohammedan Paradise to the heresiarch Cerinthus, who was cotemporary with the apostle John. But the speculations of the Magians, and the insane conjectures of the Rabbins, were the probable source of this, as well as the many other corruptions that polluted the Eastern Churches.

* The Korán and the commentators are very precise in their delineations of the geography of hell, which they call by its Hebrew name, Gehennom. They divide it into seven portions, but do not agree as to the inhabitants of the several districts. The most common opinion respecting them is, that—

The first portion, properly called Gehennom, is destined for those worshipper of the true God who have not acted up to the principles of the faith they professed.

The second, called the Lodhá, is for the Christians.

The third, named Hothama, is for Jews.

The fourth, denominated Säir, is destined for the Sabians.

The fifth, called Sacar, is for the Magians or Ghebirs.

The sixth, named Gehim, will contain Pagans and Idolaters.

And the seventh, the severest place of punishment in the lowest depths of the abyss, is named Hooviat, and reserved for the hypocritical professors of religion.

A guard of nineteen angels keep watch over each of those apartments, to whom the damned will confess the justice of their punishment, and entreat them to intercede with God for some alleviation of their grievous torments, or for utter annihilation.

Instead of the seven districts, one commentator more ration-

believe in the same creed, which is Islámism,*

ally says, that hell has seven gates, by which he allegorically intimates the seven following sins: 1st, avarice; 2nd, gluttony; 3rd, hatred; 4th, envy; 5th, anger; 6th, luxury; and 7th, pride. Another says that these gates are seven members by which men commit sin. And, in allusion to this opinion, a Persian poet says, "you have the seven gates of hell in your body; but the intelligent soul can place locks upon them all. The key of those locks is your own free will, which is ever in your own power: be cautious to guard these portals carefully lest they be opened to your own destruction."

The chief punishment of the damned, according to the Imam Caschiri, will be their banishment from the presence of God and the thick veil that will impede their fruitionof the beatific vision reserved for the righteous. But few commentators imitate this modest caution; they seem absolutely to revel in the description of every species of torment that a perverted imagination can suggest. And the traditions of the Magians and talmudists supply them with ample stores to supersede the necessity of invention.

The Mohammedans, like the Jews and Romanists, believe that the punishment of those in the district of Gehennom will not be eternal, but that, after their crimes are expiated by purgatorial flames, they will be admitted into Paradise.

Between Paradise and Hell, the Mohammedans place a district called Orf, or more commonly in its plural form Araf, a word which signifies *a distinction*. According to some, the separation is made by a veil; according to others, it is a very thick and strong wall; notwithstanding this impediment, not only can the inhabitants of al-Araf see and converse with the residents of Hell and Heaven; but the blessed and the damned can behold and converse with each other.

There is a great controversy respecting the inhabitants of al-Araf. Some believe that this is the chosen residence of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and the Martyrs, together with troops of angels in human form. But others assert it to be a species of Purgatory, designed for those whose good and bad actions are so equally balanced that neither preponderate. After the day of judgment, however, they believe that the residents of al-Araf will be admitted into Paradise.

* The Koran, in numberless pasages, declares that the creeds of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, were the same with that of Mohammed. In the second surat or chapter of the Korán,

and the Mohammedan faith, although they were different institutions. They are also elected from created beings—honoured by personal communication with God, and by descent of angels to them; supported by manifest miracles, which are contrary to the ordinary course of nature, as that some brought back the dead to life,* spoke with beasts† and trees,‡ and other inanimate beings—and other miracles of a similar nature;§ to which degree of Divine

Abraham is declared not to have been a Jew or Christian, but a genuine Moslem.

* Some of the Arabic legends respecting the miracles of their prophets are very extravagant. Dulkephel is said to have restored twenty thousand persons to life at one time. To the three persons recorded to have been raised from the dead by Jesus Christ, they add Shem the son of Noah, who, they say, mistook the call of our Lord for the angelic summons to judgment, and came out of the grave with his head half grey. After thus showing his obedience, he immediately died again.

† Soleman Ben Daoud (Solomon the son of David,) is said to have understood the language of animals, and to have conversed with them very frequently. In most of the Oriental traditions respecting speaking animals, we find birds the principal actors. In the list of prodigies recorded in the Khalifate of Motawakkel, we find a bird larger than a raven, appearing in Yemen, and pronouncing in the presence of the multitude, forty times, "Serve and fear God, God, God." In Khúzistan, also a bird, perched on the bier of a pious man, as he was being borne to the grave, and pronounced the following words in the dialect of the country: "May the Omnipotent God grant mercy to this dead person, and to those who are assisting in his funeral."

‡ Among the miracles traditionally attributed to Mohammed, are, that the rocks paid him homage, and that the trees came to meet him. From the apocryphal "Gospel of the Infancy," the Mohammedans have derived several miracles of the same kind which they attribute to Christ; and it is worthy of remark, that these same miracles are related in the "Generations of Jesus," a Jewish libel on the history of our Lord.

§ Though Mohammed in the Korán expressly disclaims the power of working miracles, yet he claims the merit of having

eminence none but God's prophets can attain.* God also has instituted a rank and order

caused the moon to appear divided, and of having procured supernatural aid for his followers on more than one occasion. The traditions ascribe to him an infinite number of miracles, most of which are the most childish that can be conceived. Take the following as a specimen: "When his majesty "(Mohammed) was repeating the Khútbah (an admonitory prayer "used "at the beginning of the Mussulman service), he used to lean "against one of the pillars of the mosque, which was made of "date-wood. But, when the pulpit was made, he went upon it "and repeated the Khútbah; and the pillar complained of it, and "wept to such a degree that it was near rending into two parts. "Then his majesty came down from the pulpit and embraced "the pillar; and it became like the blubbering of a child which "would not be pacified. At length it became silent, and his "majesty said, 'the pillar cried at losing what it used to hear "me repeat.'"—*Mischcat*, vol. ii. 710.

* The following narrative of a Mohammedan miracle is taken from the *Qanoon-e-Islám*, published by Parbury and Allen, the best account of the peculiarities of the Mussulmans in India, that exists in any language.

A certain person's ship sprang a leak at sea, and the vessel was nigh sinking, when the captain vowed with a sincere heart, that should Qadir Wullee Sahib (a celebrated Saint and Prophet) vouchsafe to stop the leak, he would offer up in his excellency's name, the profits of the cargo, and likewise a couple of small models of vessels formed of gold and silver. At that moment, the Saint was engaged with the barber, in the operation of shaving, and instantly became acquainted with the predicament in which the captain stood. Out of kindness he threw away the looking-glass he held in his hand, which flew off to the vessel, and adhering to the aperture of the ship, stopped the leak. On the vessel's reaching its destination in safety the commander, agreeably to promise, brought his offering of gold and two little vessels, one of gold the other of silver, and presented them to him. The saint directed the captain to restore to the barber his looking-glass; on which the captain, in astonishment, inquired what looking-glass he meant; and received in answer, that it was the one adhering to the aperture of the bottom of his ship where the water had entered. On inspection, it was found firmly attached to the vessel, and was accordingly removed and produced.

amongst them, by which one is more eminent than another. Thus, those amongst them who have fulfilled the office of ambassadors from God, are superior to those who have not been delegated; and those who have instituted a new mode of religious worship, to those who have not been commissioned to discharge that trust. The first of all was Adam, the last and most excellent was Mohammed, (the blessing of God be upon him.) After the order of the prophets, the most excellent of created beings were Abu-Bekr, Omar, Othman, and Ali.* After them in

* The four first Khalíphs, whose history will be found in the following chapters. Tradition says, that Mohammed congratulated the three first with an assurance of Paradise, predicted the murder of Othman, and foretold the order of their succession. "Abú-Músa Ashári said, I was along with his majesty in a garden of Medina, and a man came and asked the garden-door to be opened; and his majesty said, 'Open the door for the man, and give him joy of Paradise.' Then the door was opened for him, and behold it was Abú-Bekr. Then I gave him joy of what his majesty had said; and he praised God .... After that, a man came and asked the door to be opened; and the prophet said, 'Open the door for him, and give him joy of Paradise.' And I opened the door for him, and behold it was Omar; and I informed him of what his majesty had said; and he praised God ..... After that, a man came and asked the door to be opened, and his majesty said, 'Open the door for him, and give him joy of Paradise, on a calamity which will happen to him.' And I opened the door, and saw it was Othman, and I told him what his majesty had said; and he praised God and said, 'God has been asked assistance.'"—*Mischcat, &c.* vol. ii. 768.

"Jabir said," his majesty once said, "A good man saw in his sleep, that Abú-Bekr was joined with the messenger of God, and Omar with Abú-Bekr, and Othman with Omar." Jabir adds, when I got up from the prophet, I said, "As to the good man his majesty mentioned it alluded to himself, and the joining of one to another is this, that they are his majesty's successors."—*Mischcat," &c.*, vol. ii. 769.

The traditions, respecting Ali are very numerous; it will be

the order of dignity follow the six most honoured companions of Mohammed. Talcha, Al-Zobeir, Zeid, Saad, Abdal-Rahman, and Abu Obeida,* and after them the rest of his associates, and after them the generation of men to which Mohammed (the peace and blessing of God be on him) was sent. May the favour of God be upon them all. Then follow those wise persons, who perform good actions, The number of the prophets, according to a certain tradition, amounts to two hundred and twenty-four thousand: but according to another, to one hundred and twenty-four thousand. Amongst these, three hundred and thirteen have filled the office of ambassadors; and there are six who brought new constitutions; Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. May God bless and be favourable to them all! It is not required as a condition of faith, that a person should know their number, but, it is necessary that he should feel an affection towards them; for whoever denies the veracity of one of the

sufficient to quote two; "the prophet said, 'I am the house of knowledge, and Ali is its door." He also said, "O Lord! he "whose support I am, so is Ali; O Lord! love him who loves "Ali, and hate him who hates Ali."—*Mischcat, &c.*, vol. ii. 771.

* There are many traditions respecting these Mussulman patriarchs, but they are scarcely worthy of being extracted. One, however, is very remarkable, as it seems to prove that Mohammed was fond of imitating the language of the New Testament in the close of his life. "Ebn-Mohariz said, 'we were one day "at breakfast with his majesty, and Abu-Obeida was with us,' "and he said, 'Is there any better than us? we have embraced "Islám and fought along with you.' His majesty said, 'Yes, "a tribe which will come after you, will be better than you; "they will believe in me without having seen me.'" This is manifestly a weak imitation of John, xx. 29, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

prophets, or doubts it, or doubts concerning any thing which a prophet has told, he, indeed, is an infidel.

Preserve us, O Lord, from the sin of infidelity.

OF THE LAST DAY OF FINAL RETRIBUTION.

FAITH in the last day consists in this, that we believe in our hearts, and confess with our tongues, that there will be really a last day, the day of the resurrection; and that the Almighty God will destroy the world, and whatever creatures are in it, except, however, those things which he will please to preserve; that is to say, the throne* of his glory, and the base on which it rests, and the spirit,† and the table,‡ and the

* The divine throne, in the description of which the Orientals exhaust all the gorgeous imaginings of Eastern magnificence, is said to have been created before the world, and to have been based upon the floods. This opinion seems to have been derived from some Rabbinical perversion of Psalm, civ. 3. "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind."

† From the expression, "The Spirit of God was *brooding* over the face of the waters," or as some, in accordance with a well-known Hebrew idiom, translate the two first words, "a mighty wind," the Talmudists and Mohammedans have formed some strange legends. They tells us, that after God had created the world in a fluid mass, he called into existence the spirit of the winds, and invested it with wings so numerous, that He alone could count them; this spirit he ordered to bear up the waters, which it instantly did. Then the waters rolled above the spirit, and the throne flew over the waters.

‡ The table on which the Divine decrees were written, before the world was called into being. On this table, say the commentators, is written all that has been, is and shall be, and no one but God can read what is there inscribed. Others assert, that on this table is written the eternal copy of the Korán, a transcript of which Gabriel brought to Mohammed on the night of power, that is, on the night that the prophet pretended to have made his celebrated night-journey to heaven. Though the chap-

pen,* and paradise,† and hell,‡ with those things which are contained in them. Then God will

ters were revealed piece-meal, yet Gabriel allowed Mohammed to see the whole, once a year; tradition says, that he described it as bound in silk and adorned with gold and precious stones of Paradise; in the last year of his life, Mohammed was permitted to see it twice.

* The pen with which God wrote his decrees; it is described as so large, that a man mounted on a fleet steed could not gallop round it in one hundred years.

† The geography of Paradise was a favourite subject with the early monks in the Eastern churches; the Magians and the Rabbins had also their speculations on this curious topic, in which they showed the most monstrous ignorance, not merely of the earth's shape, but even of the geographical information common in their age and country. The Byzantine Syncellus gives us the following summary of the prevailing theory respecting Paradise and the Earth; it is the same as that recognised in the Korán.

The sacred Scripture says, "He expelled Adam, and placed him opposite the Paradise of Delight," but Babylonia and all our earth is at a great distance from Eden, which lies in the Eastern clime where we place Paradise. And that we should quote an inspired evidence for this assertion, let us summon as a witness, the divine Ephraim (Ephrem Syrus) that tongue rolling an ocean of eloquence, who in his dogmatic orations, speaks thus of Paradise.—"Paradise is higher than all the lofty pleasant places of the earth, the waters of the deluge only reached its foundations." But the men older than the deluge dwelt between the ocean and Paradise: the offspring of Cain, indeed, inhabited the land of Nod, which signifies "tremulous;" the sons of Seth dwelt on the higher grounds in obedience to the command of Adam, that they should not mix with the offspring of the fratricidal Cain. The descendants of Cain were of a low stature, on account of the curse pronounced upon their progenitor, but the children of Seth were giants, and like the angels of God in the upper regions. But the daughters of Cain, going to them with various musical instruments, brought them down from the upper regions and married them; contempt of the law consequently increasing, the deluge arose. And God brought Noah's ark (across the ocean) to Mount Ararat, and thenceforward, men dwelt on this earth. From whence it is evident, that the earth now cultivated was then deserted, for by the mercy of God, men dwelt, before the deluge, in regions near Paradise, between

receive, quicken, and assemble mankind, and demand from them an account of their actions, and examine them, and show them the books, in which their good and bad actions are written. And some shall be upon his right hand, and some upon his left. Then shall he judge them in equity, and weigh their works, as well good as bad, and reward every soul according to the deeds done in the body. Some shall enter Paradise through His goodness and mercy; but

Paradise and the ocean. But the outward darkness of which Christ speaks, lies beyond Paradise. For Paradise, with the ocean, goes all round the earth. Eden is on the eastern side, and the two lights of the sun and moon rise within Paradise, and having traversed it, set outside." The classical scholar will at once recognise the almost perfect identity between this and the geographical system adopted by Homer; and those acquainted with Indian literature, will see that this account of Paradise is exactly the same with that of Mount Meru, in the Hindú mythology.

‡ The traditions respecting hell and its torments, would fill a volume; in one, we find the following curious astronomical theory. "Hassan Basori said, Abu-Horeira related to me, from the prophet of God, who said, 'The sun and moon are two pieces of cheese, which will be twisted up and thrown into hell-fire on the day of resurrection;' and I said, 'What are the faults of the sun and moon?' Abu Horeira said, 'I inform you from the prophet of God.'"—*Mischcat, &c.*, vol. ii. 638.

The following traditions seem to have been derived from the Hindus, among whom there is the constant mistake of enormous magnitude for sublimity. "Ebn-Omar said, 'the infernals will be very fat and big in hell; so much so, that the distance between the bottom of their ears and their shoulders, will be seven hundred years' journey; and verily, the thickness of their skins is seventy cubits; and their teeth like the mountain of Ohod.' .... Abdallah-ebn-Harith reported from Mohammed, 'Verily, there are serpents in hell, like camels with two bumps, one of them will bite once, the pain of which will be felt forty years; and verily, there are scorpions in hell like mules saddled, and one of them will bite, and its pain will remain forty years.'"—*Mischcat, &c., ibid.*

some shall be cast into Hell. But of the faithful, none shall remain in flaming torments; but they shall enter Paradise when they have suffered punishment according to the proportion of their sins; for the faithful shall ever abide in Paradise, but the infidels in the flaming tortures of hell. Reverential fear is required to the perfection of belief in the resurrection; so that he is to be deemed an infidel who is careless about it, as likewise he who denies it, or doubts concerning it, or says, "I do not fear the resurrection, nor do I desire Paradise, nor do I dread hell."

Preserve us, O Lord, from the sin of infidelity.

OF THE DIVINE DECREE AND PREDESTINATION.

Faith in the decree of God, is that we believe in the heart and confess with tongue, that God, the Most Highest, has decreed all things and modes of their occurrence;* so that nothing can happen in this world, with respect to the conditions or operations of affairs, whether for good or evil—obedience or disobedience†—faith or

* The doctrine of predestination was that on which Mohammed laid the most stress, in conversation with his disciples. The traditions on this head, are numerous and precise; we shall quote those which best illustrate the different clauses of this section. "Ayesha, (the daughter of Abu Bekr and favourite wife of Mo-"hammed,) reported, 'The prophet was called to say prayers "over the bier of one of the children of the companions (those "who joined Mohammed after his flight from Mecca), and I said "to him, 'O Prophet of God, be happy; for this child is a bird "of the birds of Paradise, for it hath committed no sin.' Then "the Prophet said, 'Peradventure, it may be otherwise, because "God hath created those who are fit for Paradise when in their "father's loins, and those for hell at the same time.' "—*Mischcat*, "vol. i. 27.

† Abu Horeira reported, "the prophet of God said that Adam "and Moses (in the world of spirits) maintained a debate before "God, and Adam got the better of Moses; who said, 'Thou

infidelity—health or illness*—riches or poverty—life or death; which is not contained in the decree of God, and in his judgment, ordinance and will. But God has thus decreed virtue, obedience and faith, that he may so ordain and will them to be subservient to his direction, pleasure, and command. On the contrary, he has decreed vice, disobedience and infidelity, and still ordains, wills, and decrees them; but without his salutary direction, good pleasure, or command, nay rather, by his temptation, wrath and prohibitions. But whoever will say, that God is not delighted with virtue and faith, and is not wroth with vice and infidelity, or that God has decreed good and evil with equal complacency, is an infidel. For God wills good that he may take pleasure in it; and evil, that it may become the object of his rightful indignation.

Direct us, good God, into the right path.†

"art that Adam, whom God created by the power of his hand, "and breathed into thee from his own spirit, and made the angels "bow before thee, and gave thee an habitation in his own paradise; after which thou threwest man upon the earth, from the "fault which thou didst commit.' Adam said, 'Thou art that "Moses, whom God selected for his prophecy, and to converse "with, and he gave thee twelve tables, in which are explained "every thing, and God made thee his confident, and the bearer "of his secrets; then how long was the Bible written before I "was created?" Moses said 'Forty years'—Then Adam said, "'Didst thou see in the Bible, that Adam disobeyed God?'—He "said, 'Yes.'—Adam said, 'Dost thou reproach me on a matter "which God wrote in the Bible forty years before creating "me?'"—*Mischcat*, vol. i. 26.

* Salmah once said, 'O prophet of God! you suffer pain "from the poison which you swallowed in mutton,' (See the "preceding chapter.) He said, 'I do not experience any thing "from it, but what was pre-ordained.'"—*Mischcat*, vol. i. 37.

† "Abu-Horeira reported, the prophet of God came out of "his house, when we were debating about Fate; and he was

End of the First Part of the Creed IMAN (Faith); *here beginneth the Second Part* DIN (Practice).

OF LUSTRATIONS, MORE ESPECIALLY THAT CALLED GHASL, OR THE GREATER PURIFICATION.

IT must be remembered, that there are seven species of water fit for rightly performing religious ablutions; that is to say, rain, sea, river, fountain, well, snow and ice-water. But the principal requisites for the lustration Ghasl, are three: 1, intention; 2, a perfect cleansing; 3, that the water should touch the entire skin and every hair. And there are five requisites of the traditional law, or Sonna*: 1, the appropriate phrase, *Bismillah*,† must be pronounced; 2, the palms must be washed before the hands are put into the basin; 3, the lustration Wodu must be performed; 4, the skin must be rubbed with the hand; and 5, it must be prolonged .... (We omit the cases in which this lustration is required.)

"angry and became red in the face to such a degree, that you "would say the seeds of a pomegranate had been bruised upon "it. And he said, hath God ordered you to debate of Fate, or "was I sent to you for this? Your forefathers were destroyed "for debating about Fate and destiny; I adjure you not to "argue on these points."—*Mischcat*, vol. i. 31.

* The Sonna of the Mohammedans exactly corresponds with the *Misnah* of the Jews, and comprehends all their religious traditions.

† This well-known formula signifies, "In the name of the most merciful God;" the Mohammedans use it at the beginning of every undertaking, and write it at the commencement of every letter or treatise; it begins every chapter in the Korân, except the ninth.

OF THE LUSTRATION WODU.

The principal parts, indeed the divine* institutions of the lustration Wodu, are six: 1, intention; 2, the washing of the entire face; 3, the washing of the hands and fore-arms up to the elbows; 4, the rubbing of some parts of the head; 5, the washing of the feet as far as the ancles; and 6, observance of the prescribed order. And the institutes of the traditional law about this lustration are ten: 1, the preparatory formula, Bismillah, must be used; 2, the palms must be washed before the hands are put into the basin; 3. the mouth must be cleansed; 4, water must be drawn through the nostrils; 5, the entire head and ears must be rubbed; 6, if the beard be thick, the fingers must be drawn through it; 7, the toes must be separated; 8, the right hand and foot should be washed before the left; 9, these ceremonies must be thrice repeated; 10, the whole must be performed in uninterrupted succession .... (We omit the cases in which this lustration is required.)

OF PURIFICATON BY SAND.†

The divine institutions respecting purification by sand are four: 1, intention; 2, the rubbing

* They are called *divine*, because they are taken from the Korán, chap. v.

† The Mohammedans have borrowed the permission to use sand for water, in case of necessity, from the Jews. Indeed, Cedrenus mentions an instance of sand being used for a Christian baptism. Sheer necessity dictated the permission; we need not, therefore, have recourse to Roland's strange theory, that sand is really a liquid. Four requisites to its validity are added by the commentators: 1, the person must be on a journey; 2, he must have diligently searched for water; 3, it must be at the stated time of prayer; 4, the sand must be clean.

of the face; 3, the rubbing of the hands and fore-arms up to the elbows; and 4, the observance of this order. But the Sonnite ordinances are three: 1, the formula Bismillah; 2, that the right hand and foot precede the left; and 3, that the ceremony be performed without interruption.

OF PRAYER.*

THE divine institutions, on which the rites of prayer rest are thirteen: 1, intention; 2, magnification; 3, its formula (God is great); 4, an erect posture; 5, reading the first chapter of the Korán; 6, a bending of the body; 7, raising it again; 8, prostrate adoration; 9, sitting down;† 10, sitting down a second time; 11, the second confession; 12, its formula, (I testify that Mohammed is the Ambassador of God); 13, the observance of this order. But, the Sonnite ordinances are: 1, the first proclamation of the time of prayer, called Azan;‡ 2, the second

* A more full account of the ceremonies required at prayer, may be found in the *Qanoon-e-Islàm*.

† For the purpose of meditation.

‡ The Muezzin, or crier, before making proclamation, should repeat the following prayer: "O my God! give me piety; purify me: thou alone hast the power. Thou art my benefactor "and my master, O Lord! Thou art towards me as I desire, "may I be towards thee as thou desirest. My God! cause my "interior to be better than my exterior. Direct all my actions "to rectitude. O God! deign in thy mercy to direct my will "towards that which is good. Grant me at the same time, true "honour and spiritual poverty, O thou, the most merciful of the "merciful." After this prayer, he must make proclamation in the following terms: "God is great (four times repeated); I "bear witness, that there is no God but God (twice repeated); "I bear witness, that Mohammed is the prophet of God (twice "repeated); Come to the Temple of salvation (twice repeated); "God is great, God is most great; there is no God but God, and

proclamation; 3, the first confession, (I acknowledge that there is no God but God); 4, a certain form of prayer.* There are five things required before prayer: 1, the body must be free from every polluting stain;† 2, it must be covered with clean garment; 3, the worshipper must stand in a pure place; 4, the stated time must be observed; 5, the face must be turned to the Kebla, or temple of Mecca.—Prayers should be offered five times in the day: 1, at noon, when five genuflexions are necessary; 2, in the afternoon, which requires five also; 3, the evening, which demands three; 4, the night, which requires four; 5, the morning, when two genuflexions are sufficient.

OF ALMS.‡

ALMS should be given from five kinds of property; 1, cattle: 2, money; 3, corn; 4, fruits; and 5, merchandise. But there are three kinds of cattle from which alms must be given: 1, camels;

"Mohammed is his prophet." The same proclamation is made at the five canonical hours, but at morning prayer the Muezzin must add "Prayer is better than sleep" (twice repeated).—*Hidayŭt-ool-Islám*. Calcutta, 1804.

* The formula is thus given in Hottinger's *Ecclesiastical History*. "O God, we implore thy aid and ask pardon from thee; we believe thee; we trust in thee; we humble ourselves before thee; leaving and rejecting him who denies thee. O God, we will worship and pray to thee. We will adore thee, we will hasten to thee, we will speed to converse with thee; we will place all our hope in thy mercy. We will fear thy punishment; the punishment which thou hast prepared for unbelievers, for thy wrath is upon unbelievers."

† Consequently the lesser lustration, Wodu, must precede prayer.

‡ The Oriental nations have from the earliest ages regarded almsgiving as a religious duty.

2, oxen; and 3, sheep. In order that alms should be given duly, six things are necessary: 1, the donor must believe in Islám; 2, he must be free; 3, he must be perfectly master of his property; 4, the value of the property must be of a certain amount; 5, it must have been a year in his possession; and 6, the animals from which alms are due, must be those which he pastures.* Alms must be paid from both gold and silver money, according to the preceding regulations.—Three things are required in giving alms for corn; 1, the corn must have been planted by man, and not be of spontaneous growth; 2, it must be laid up in a granary; and 3, it must amount to a certain quantity.—Alms must be given from the fruit of the palm and the vine; and for the right performance of this, the four first of the six preceding precepts must be observed.—The requisites for giving pecuniary alms are also applicable to the case of merchandise. But the divine institution respecting the alms distributed,—with respect to the amount of wealth, and with respect to the number of persons, at the end of Ramazan,†—is two-fold: 1, the intention with which the alms are bestowed; and 2, their actual distribution.

OF ABSTINENCE.

The requisites for a lawful fast are three: 1, the person must profess Islám; 2, he must have

* Alms consequently are not due from beasts of burden, or animals used for the purposes of husbandry.

† At the end of the fast Ramazan, every true believer is obliged to give an alms, called *Zea*, for every member of his family.

attained the age of puberty; and 3, he must be of sound mind. Five divine institutions must be observed in fasting; ten things make it null and void. (The particulars need not be enumerated.)

OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA.

THE divine institutions of this rite are five: 1, the intention with which a person resolves to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and binds himself by a vow to God; 2, a residence on Mount Arafat; 3, shaving the head in the valley of Mina; 4, going round the temple of Mecca; and 5, the course between Safa and Merwa.

End of the Mohammedan Creed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST FOUR KHALIPHS.

MOHAMMED, like Alexander the Great, died without naming a successor, but the dominions he had acquired were not dismembered, because the new religion united all its professors into one body. That there should be a single leader was unanimously agreed, but to whom the office should be intrusted was for three days fiercely disputed. Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the prophet, had the best claim, if hereditary right was taken into account; a large body of the Mussulmans believe that Mohammed had made an express declaration, in his favour, but his character was not very popular, and he had a powerful enemy in Ayesha, whose hatred he had provoked by insinuations against her chas-

tity. As she had attended her husband in his sickness, she had an opportunity of suppressing any declaration he might have made respecting his nephew, and her subsequent conduct shows that she was not very scrupulous in her means of revenge. It is not, however, by any means certain that Mohammed made any such declaration; though it may fairly be presumed, that Ayesha would have concealed it, for besides hating Ali, she was jealous of his wife Fatima, her own step-daughter, whom she regarded as her rival in influence and dignity. She was, besides naturally anxious to secure the elevation of her father, who had paid her the unusual compliment of taking a name from his daughter, and ever since her marriage called himself Abú-Bekr, (the father of the Virgin.)

Mohammed seems himself to have foreseen the disputes that would arise among his successors; "the Khaliphate," said he, "will not last more than thirty years after my death;" it would probably have found a much earlier term of destruction, had not the fiery Omar given the example of swearing fidelity to Abú-Bekr, and most of the other "companions" adopted the same course. Ali for some time resisted, but Omar besieging him in his own house, and threatening to fire the building, he was forced to surrender, and swear allegiance to his rival.

Abú-Bekr was born at Mecca some years after Mohammed; he was one of the earliest converts to Islám, indeed, by many he is named "the first believer;" his rank and influence were unquestionably of the greatest service to the prophet

during the dangers he had to encounter in the early part of his career. The original name of this important convert was Abd-al-Kaaba, that is the servant of the Kaaba, a mark of the superstitious respect which the Arabs showed for their ancient sanctuary. When he became a Mussulman, he took the name Abd-allah, that is a servant of God; finally, when he gave his daughter Ayesha in marriage to Mohammed, he called himself Abú-Bekr, as has been already mentioned, and by that name he is best known to posterity.

The title of the new sovereign, was that of Khaliph or vicar of the prophet; he was both *Emir-al-mominin,* "prince of the true believers," and also *Imám-al-moslimin,* "head of the faithful," thus uniting in himself the authority of a monarch and of a pontiff. Abú-Bekr had been always remarkable for his boundless attachment to Mohammed; we have already seen how he swore to his belief in the night-journey to heaven; but tradition mentions a still more remarkable anecdote of this friendship, which occurred during the flight from Mecca. It was Abú-Bekr who accompanied the prophet on this occasion; the pursuit was close and vigorous, the fugitives, worn down by fatigue, sought refuge in a cave. But God provided for their safety; he sent the timid dove to build her nest in the mouth of the cavern, and a spider to spin its web over the entrance; the sight of these circumstances deceived the Meccans, and they passed the cave, persuaded that it was deserted. Few traditions are more frequently quoted by the Arabs than

this; the following stanzas alluding to it are taken from one of their most popular poems.

How highly honour'd was that cave,
Holding the great, the good, the brave!
But blindness. like a wizard's spell,
Upon the vile pursuers fell.

Yes, truth itself, and he who bold
In Islam's cause ne'er falsehood told,
Were there—and yet the wicked cried,
"Away! that cave could no one hide."

For there they saw, a fearless guest,
The timid dove had built her nest;
And there the spider undismay'd
Had wide his wondrous web display'd.

But Abú-Bekr had stronger claims to popularity; he was brave, mild and generous; his modest demeanour made him generally beloved, his pious character was universally respected. He came to the throne at a very agitated period, for while the Mussulmans were distracted by various disputes, a new impostor threatened Islamism with total ruin. Moseilama took advantage of Mohammed's death to urge his pretensions with renewed vigour, several of the Arab tribes threw off the yoke that had been imposed upon them, and prepared to revive their ancient institutions, and it seemed as if the new system would not long survive its founder. But the promptitude of Abú-Bekr disconcerted his opponents; he sent an army against the rebels, under the fiery Khaled, and had soon the satisfaction to learn that Moseilama, with the chief of his partisans, had been exterminated. This was followed by the complete subjugation of Arabia, and the final establishment of Islamism throughout the peninsula.

But such success was not obtained without corresponding losses. Abú-Bekr particularly lamented the number of the prophet's companions that fell in these campaigns, and fearing that the revelations of Mohammed might be dispersed and lost, he gave orders that they should be collected into the Korán. We shall have, in another part of this work, occasion to notice the slovenly manner in which the persons employed performed their task; the compilation was subsequently revised in the reign of the Khaliph Othman, and it is probable that there are many passages far different from those which Mohammed wrote.

The Khaliph not knowing how to find employment for the vast multitude of enthusiasts that arose in every part of Arabia, resolved to display the standard of the faith in the fields of Syria. Never was there a more favourable moment for such an enterprise; for never before had successive revolutions so weakened the strength of the Byzantine and Persian empires. Desirous first to ascertain his chance of success, he sent detachments to the borders of Syria and Babylonia, or as it is now more commonly called, Iràk. As they encountered no obstacle, but returned loaded with plunder, the Khaliph invited all the Arabs to join in the enterprise he projected, and crowds of recruits flocked to him from every quarter. When all things were ready, he reviewed the troops and issued his celebrated code of regulations for the conduct of the army; it was addressed to the general Abù Sofián, and contained the following directions: "Take care "to treat your men with tenderness and lenity.

"Consult with your officers upon all pressing "occasions, and encourage them to face the "enemy with bravery and resolution. If you "are victorious, spare all the aged, the women, "and the children. Neither cut down palm-trees "nor burn any fields of corn. Spare all fruit-"trees; slay no cattle but such as are required "for your own use. Adhere to your engage-"ments inviolably; spare the inhabitants of "monasteries; desecrate no houses of religious "worship. Cleave the skulls of those members "of the synagogue of Satan, who shave their "crowns, give them no quarter, unless they "embrace Islamism, or pay tribute."

To relate the particulars of the mighty conquests achieved by the army of the Saracens, as the Arabs were from this time generally called, would be equally inconsistent with the plan and limits of this volume. We must, at present, be content to say, that from the cowardice and treachery of the Byzantine provincial governors, the invaders encountered no effective opposition, and in less than two years, the greater part of Syria was subdued. While the Mussulman army was thus pursuing its career of victory, Abú-Bekr died, and was interred near Mohammed at Medina.

The character of the first Khaliph had a beneficial effect on the Mohammedan religion; for though the partisans of Ali accuse him of ambition, and of uniting with his daughter Ayesha to suppress the prophet's declarations in favor of Ali, yet they do not deny him the praise of disinterestedness, justice, and benevolence. Before his accession, he had bestowed the greater

part of his estate to feed the poor, and had been publicly named by the prophet the most charitable of men. When placed at the head of affairs he only took from the treasury the sum absolutely necessary for his daily support; before entering on the sovereignty, he ordered an exact account to be taken of his personal estate, and at his death it was found to be considerably diminished. In fact, the absolute ruler of the richest countries of the world left behind him but a single camel and an Ethiopian slave, and even these he bequeathed to his successor. He dictated his will to Othman in the following terms:—"IN THE "NAME OF THE MOST MERCIFUL GOD. This is "the last will and testament of *Abd-allah Ebn* "*Abú Koháfa*, when he was in the last hour "of this world, and the first of the next; an hour "in which the infidel must believe, the wicked "be convinced of their evil ways, and liars "speak the truth. I nominate *Omar Ebn al* "*Khattáb* my successor; therefore, hearken to "him, and obey him. If he acts right, he will "confirm my expectations; if otherwise, he "must render an account of his own actions. "My intentions are good, but I cannot foresee "the future results. However, those who do "ill, shall render a severe account hereafter. "Fare-ye-well. May ye be ever attended by the "Divine favor and blessing." When Abú-Bekr had concluded this dictation, he fainted; on his recovery, he desired Othman to read the document, soon after which, he expired. When information of the event was brought to Omar, he exclaimed, "The life of Abú-Bekr has been "such, that it will be impossible for those who

"come after, to imitate his sublime example." Two proverbs attributed to him, deserve to be quoted: "Good actions are a sure protection "against the blows of adversity,"—"Death is "the most difficult of all things before it comes, "and the easiest when it is past."

Omar was, like his predecessor, a native of Mecca; he had been originally a camel-herd, and never became quite free from the coarseness and rusticity incident to his humble origin. At first a zealous idolater, he proposed to extirpate all the followers of Mohammed; when he became afterwards a Mussulman, he was just as eager to massacre all who would not believe in the prophet. Violent on every occasion, he breathed nothing but slaughter; and countless anecdotes are related of his unrelenting temper. One of these must suffice. A Mussulman having a suit against a Jew, was condemned by Mohammed, and in consequence, carried his appeal before the tribunal of Omar; scarcely had he stated his case, when Omar, springing from his seat, struck the appellant dead with one blow of his sabre, exclaiming, "So perish all who will not submit to the decision of God's chosen prophet." Rigorous justice, as interpreted by the Mohammedan laws, and extreme severity, rendered his character more respected than beloved. Mohammed said of him, "Truth speaks by the mouth of Omar." He added, that "if God had to send another "prophet on the earth, Omar would be the "object of his choice."

When Abù-Bekr informed Omar that he had chosen him as his successor; Omar, with mingled pride and humility, answered, "I have no

need of the Khaliphate," Abú-Bekr replied, "But the Khaliphate has need of you," and thus removed all further scruple. On his accession, he called himself the "Khaliph of the Khaliph of God's apostle," but finding the title inconveniently long, he changed it into that of "Commander of the Faithful;" and this became, subsequently, the favourite designation of his successors. When first he addressed his subjects, he stood a step lower on the pulpit than Abú-Bekr had been accustomed to do; he informed his hearers, that he would not have undertaken the arduous task of government, only that he reposed perfect confidence in their intention to observe the law, and adhere to the pure faith; he concluded with these remarkable words: "O "Mussulmans I take God to witness, that none "of you shall be *too strong* for me to sacrifice "the rights of the weak, nor *too weak* for me to "neglect the rights of the strong."

No sooner was Omar placed at the head of affairs, than the armies of the Mohammedans seemed to have acquired tenfold vigour; and this was not diminished by the severe treatment which the gallant Khaled, for a trivial offence, received from the jealous Khaliph. The greater part of Syria and Mesopotamia had been subdued during the life of Abú-Bekr, the conquest of these countries was now completed; the ancient empire of the Persians was overthrown at the battle of Kádeseh; Palestine, Phœnicia, and Egypt, submitted to the Saracen yoke almost without a struggle; and the standard of the prophet floated in triumph from the sands of the Cyrenian desert to the banks of the Indus.

" During the reign of Omar," says Khondemir, " the Saracens conquered thirty-six thousand " cities, towns, and castles, destroyed four thou- " sand Christian, Magian, and Pagan, temples, and " erected fourteen hundred mosques."

The annals of the world present no parallel to this recital; the Arabs were animated by an enthusiasm which made them despise the most fearful odds; they had ever in their mouths the magnificent orientalism traditionally ascribed to Mohammdə, " in the shades of the scymitars is paradise pre-figured;" they sought battle as a feast, and counted danger a sport. A fiercer spirit of course displayed itself in the Mohammedan creed; the sanguinary precepts of propagandism, to which the prophet had given utterance after his power was established at Medina, quite obscured the milder doctrine taught at Mecca; and even these were surpassed in ferocity by traditions which some of the sterner enthusiasts declared that they had derived from the prophet himself. Abù-Horeira* declared that he heard from Mohammed, " He who " shall die without having fought for God, or " who never proposed that duty to himself, verily " consigns himself to destruction by his hy- " pocrisy," and also the singular declaration, " He who shall bestow a horse upon one who " would enlist himself under the banner of the

* This name is a curious example of the use of the word Abú (father) amongst the Arabians: they frequently apply it to a quality for which a person is remarkable; thus " the father of " stupidity," means a blockhead, " the father of beards," a man with a flowing beard. Abú Horeira was remarkable for nothing so much as his attachment to a favourite cat, and hence his name, which signifies " the father of a cat."

"Most High, and be one who has faith in God
"and in his promises, surely, both the food of
"that horse and the sustenance of his rider, with
"the ordure of the former, shall be placed in the
"scales for his advantage on the day of judg-
"ment." We shall add one more preserved on
the authority of Ebn Abbas: "There are two
"descriptions of eyes which the fire of hell shall
"not destroy; the eyes that weep in contem-
"plating the indignation of God, and the eyes
"which are closed when in the act of combat
"for the cause of God."

Neither splendid victories nor extensive dominions changed the stern character of Omar; he still preserved the rustic simplicity of his manners, and his ancient contempt for luxurious ornament. When his forces had blockaded Jerusalem, and the inhabitants, despairing of success, offered to surrender to the Khaliph in person; he departed from Medina to receive their submission, mounted on a red camel, having for his entire equipage two sacks, one containing corn and the other fruit: before him was a leathern vessel of water, and behind him a large platter from which he used to take his meals. In this guise he travelled the entire road from Medina to Jerusalem, punishing the Mussulmans who led a scandalous life, and every where providing for a rigorous administration of justice.

On his arrival, the inhabitants prepared a splendid palace for his reception; but he refused to enter the city and had a tent erected outside the walls. In this tent, the deputies found the master of their destinies sitting on the naked earth. The terms granted to the citizens of

Jerusalem are remarkable for their moderation; the security of the persons and properties of the inhabitants was guaranteed, the free exercise of religion permitted, and the churches allowed to remain with their present possessors. Even when the Khaliph was anxious to erect a mosque, he requested the patriarch to point him out an appropriate situation; that prelate led him to the spot where Solomon's temple once stood, which was then covered with filth, and the Khaliph readily accepted the ground as it was. He himself set the example of clearing the rubbish; the army followed with eager emulation, and the Mosque of Omar, erected on this spot, is one of the most beautiful specimens of Arabian architecture. But though tolerant to the Christians, the Khaliph showed himself severe to those of his own followers who had departed from the rigour of the national manners. Having learned that some of his men wore flowing robes of silk, he ordered them to be extended on the earth, with their faces to the ground, and their silken robes to be torn from their shoulders. He punished with the bastinado those convicted of drinking wine; he made proclamation that those who had transgressed, should accuse themselves, and such was the influence he possessed over his troops, that many voluntarily confessed their guilt, and submitted to the degrading punishment.

Omar was assassinated in the eleventh year of his reign, by a slave, whose complaints he had refused to hear. He was buried in the same tomb with Abú-Bekr and Mohammed.

In the history of Mohammedanism, Omar is a

person second only in importance to the founder of Islám. His strict severity was useful at a time when unprecedented success seemed to excuse military violence; his impartiality greatly abated the calamities of conquest. We have already mentioned, that he did not spare the gallant Khaled, but it is probable that, in his conduct to that hero, he was actuated more by jealousy than by a love of justice; it must however be added, that in no instance did he permit high station to shelter oppressors. A curious circumstance, characteristic of the age, is recorded. Omar carried a cane with which he personally chastised officers even of the highest rank, whom he detected in any guilty action, and hence arose the proverb: "Omar's cane is more terrible than the sword of the bravest warrior."

His strictness in enforcing religious ordinances was carried to the very extreme of fanaticism; by his orders the splendid library which the Ptolomys had collected at Alexandria, was burnt to heat the public baths; and the invaluable records of Persia, assembled by the zeal of the Sassanides in Modain, were hurled into the waters of the Tigris. His early education had rendered him insensible to the charms of literature or art; when his generals sent him, from the palace of the Persian kings, an unrivalled piece of tapestry, representing a flower-garden, worked with gold and precious stones, he ordered this elaborate piece of workmanship to be cut in pieces, and the fragments distributed to his soldiers. For his own use, he had neither palace, nor court, nor house; during the time of prayer, he publicly officiated in the mosque; the

remainder of the day he spent in the streets and squares, and it was there he gave audience to the ambassadors of the most powerful cotemporary princes. His dress was not better than that of his meanest subjects; when reproached for the deficiences of his appearance, he replied, "I would rather please the Lord by my conduct, than men by my dress." He was more indiscriminate in his charity than Abú-Bekr; the first Khaliph relieved none whose distress had been occasioned by vicious conduct, Omar gave to all who asked. When reproached for making no distinction, he replied, "Man is placed upon the "earth, only to do good to his brethren; the "judgment of man's worthiness should be left "to his Creator." The temperance of Omar was as remarkable as his simplicity; his ordinary food was coarse barley-bread seasoned with salt, and on days of abstinence the salt was laid aside; his only beverage was water. When at meals, he invited all who chanced to be present, to take a share.

But the splendour of his public works was a strange contrast to the meanness of his private life. We have already mentioned the mosque he caused to be erected in Jerusalem; he also greatly enlarged and beautified that which Mohammed had built in Medina. By his orders, the foundations were laid of cities that rapidly grew to greatness, Old Cairo, Cufa, and Bassora. He caused the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea to be repaired and opened, in order to facilitate the importation of corn into Arabia, which the recent enlargement of the cities had rendered a matter of prime necessity. It was

Omar, who first introduced the custom of dating from the Hegira; before his time the Arabians dated from the last great event which had interested the whole nation,—a war, a famine, or a plague,—and thus rendered their chronology a mass of inextricable confusion. To him also is owing the institution of a police force in Mecca and Medina, the establishment of a fund to provide for the pay of the army, and the preparation of an equitable scale of rewards for those who had distinguished themselves in the propagation of Islám. It is no wonder, that with such claims to admiration, the name of Omar should be so celebrated among the most rigid sects of the Mohammedans. But while the Sonnites labour to extend the fame of Omar, his memory is detested by the partisans of Ali; his name is the proverbial expression for all that is base in the countries where the Schiite principles prevail; no person that bears it, dare own it in public; and to such excess do the Persians carry their hatred, that they celebrate the day of Omar's assassination as a public festival.

Omar, finding death approach, was at a loss whom to nominate his successor; and to remedy the difficulty, devised the most extraordinary expedient than can be imagined. He directed that a council of six should be assembled after his death, that three days should be allowed them for deliberation, and that if, at the end of that time, they had not agreed on a new Khaliph, they should all be slain. The six who met to deliberate under these circumstances, were, Ali, cousin and son in-law of Mohammed, Othman, likewise his son-in-law, Zobeir, the cousin of the

prophet, and Abd-al-rahman, Talha, and Saad, his favourite companions. After some deliberation they elected Othman, and he was installed third Khaliph.

Othman was, like his predecessors, a native of Mecca, sprung from a different branch of the same tribe that had given birth to the prophet. He married successively two daughters of Mohammed, long acted as his secretary, and enjoyed his intimate confidence. It is said, that Mohammed was so delighted with the generosity displayed by his secretary, that he exclaimed, "O my God, I am satisfied with Othman, be "thou also satisfied with him." On another occasion, seeing Othman approach, he covered his face with his robe, and said, "Should not "I be ashamed before a man whose merits "would put angels to the blush?" At the time of his accession, he was more than eighty years of age, but his health was unshaken, and the vigour of his faculties unabated.

The third Khaliph pursued the warlike policy of his predecessors; by his orders the Mussulman armies completed the conquest of Persia, and extended the sway of the Saracens to the river Oxus, and the borders of India. Northern Africa, as far as the shores of the Atlantic, was subdued by another army; and a fleet, equipped in the harbours of Egypt and Syria, subdued the island of Cyprus, and menaced the northern coasts of the Mediterranean. But this success produced its natural effect; it required all the energies of Omar's stern character to resist the progress of luxury and dissipation; the weak Othman was utterly incapable of any similar

exertion. The wild sons of the desert began to rival in magnificence the most wealthy monarchs; they became ambitious of places and titles, they preferred the splendour of the court, to the glory of the field. Othman's gentleness and facility accelerated the progress of corruption; naturally generous, he was unwilling to refuse any applicant, and as the foremost candidates for office are generally those least fitted for its duties, the administration fell into the hands of the designing and the profligate. With some show of reason, the old companions of Mohammed complained that they were set aside to make room for the family of Othman; and, with still more justice, that the imprudence and wantonness of youth was preferred to their experience.

Religion did not escape from the general corruption; new sects began to be formed; and the jealousy of the partisans of Ali daily acquired fresh strength. Abu-Dar, an old companion of the prophet, misrepresenting some passages of the Korán declared that the riches of this world were the source of every crime, and that the wealthy should be compelled by force to give their superfluities to the poor. Such doctrine was sure to obtain a favourable hearing in a half-civilized country, where, from the unequal distribution of plunder a few had been suddenly enriched, but the great bulk of the population reduced to comparative poverty. At the same time, another secretary announced that Mohammed was about to re-appear, and execute justice on the wicked and cruel men who tyrannized over the Mussulmans. The people, expecting an approaching regeneration, despised their

rulers, and neglected the duties of social life. The second revision of the Korán, ordained by Othman, was regarded by many of the Mussulmans as a corruption of the true religion; they suspected that the Khaliph did not pay sufficient deference to the authority of the prophet; especially as in certain prayers he made four postrations where Mohammed only used two; and he had rebuilt a chapel destroyed by Mohammed's special command.

We have been so long accustomed to see the Mohammedan religion united with despotic government, that we are naturally surprised to find a pure democracy under the Khaliphate; from the very beginning, every affair of importance was submitted to the general assembly; and all, except slaves, were permitted to state their opinions freely. No practical inconvenience arose from this custom, whilst disorder was checked by the sacred character of the prophet, the dignified demeanour of Abu-Bekr, or the stern severity of Omar. But the imbecile Othman possessed no such influence; when he attempted to stem the popular tide, he was attacked in his very pulpit, and driven by volleys of stones from the assembly. Satires and lampoons, "those straws," which, as Lord Bacon says, "show the direction of the wind," appeared in countless abundance, we shall venture to translate one as a specimen.

Abú-Bekr and Omar, both true to their trust,
A minaret raised as a guide to the just:
From the Mussulmans' treasure, they ne'er but with sorrow
And in absolute need, e'en a dirhem would borrow.
But thou, worthless Othman, art ready to trample
On their laws, and their rules, and their noble example:

Thou hast call'd to thy councils, the wicked, the base,
Whom the prophet of God drove away with disgrace;
The wealth of God's servants to them thou hast given,
And the hearts of the good by thy follies are riven.

Parties and factions were formed on every side; each province demanded a new governor, every faction desired a new Khaliph. The leaders in these disturbances were the ancient companions of the prophet; and many of the most devoted Mussulmans were ready to join in a revolution. At length a part of the Egyptian army marched suddenly to Medina, and demanded an immediate reform of abuses. By a liberal use of promises and persuasions, they were induced to retire; but it was only to retun the following year, irritated by disappointment, and strengthened by large bodies of partisans from Cufa and Bassorah. Othman once more soothed the mutineers, but as they were returning home, they learned that the Khaliph's secretary had sent official orders that they should be massacred. It is not quite certain that the Khaliph had sanctioned this perfidy, but that it was meditated does not admit of doubt. The soldiers, justly enraged, again appeared before Medina, demanding the head of the secretary; when that was refused, they slew Othman himself.

The fatal day on which this atrocity occurred was Friday, which the Mohammedans keep holy. It was Othman's custom on this day to fast until he had read through the entire Korán, and he was engaged in the perusal of the sacred volume, when the approach of the assassins was announced. Some of the Khaliph's friends advised him to make some preparations for resistance, but he replied, that he had seen Mohammed in a dream,

and had been informed, that they should break their fast together that day in Paradise.

In the mean time, the conspirators advanced sword in hand. Five hundred guards attempted to check their progress, but were cut to pieces; the Khaliph's wife threw herself in their path and had her hand cut off; the sons of Ali, and some of the old companions of the prophet, endeavoured to propitiate the mutineers, but were forced to consult their own safety by flight. Othman tranquilly read the Korán in the midst of the confusion; he scarcely deigned to raise his head, when the enraged soldiers burst into his apartment. At their head was a son of Abú-Bekr, named Mohammed, who seized Othman by the beard, and prepared to strike a fatal blow. The Khaliph looking him steadily in the face, asked, "O Mohammed? what think you "that your sainted father would say, if he saw "my beard in your grasp?" Struck with the words, Mohammed drew back in silence; but his companions, less scrupulous, rushed upon Othman, and he fell covered with wounds. His blood gushed upon the Korán which he held in his hand; it is said to be still preserved as a relic in the mosque of Damascus. So great was the terror diffused by this event, that no one dared to perform the funeral obsequies; the body remained three days unburied; at length Ali give orders for its sepulture, but it was buried by night, and in a private cemetery.

The orthodox Mussulmans reverence Othman in the present day for the action which excited most resentment in his own, namely, the revision of the Korán. They cite respecting him, the

following traditionary saying of the prophet: "I "have seen the name of Othman written on the "gate of Paradise; I have seen it marked be-"hind the throne of God, and on the wings of "the archangel Gabriel." The Schiites regard him as a usurper, but they do not execrate his memory so much as that of Omar.

At first the horror inspired by this murder was so great, that all parties were reduced to silence. The surviving companions of Mohammed took advantage of this interval of tranquillity, and nominated Ali fourth Khaliph.

Ali was the son of Abu Táleb, that uncle of Mohammed who had so faithfully watched over his childhood. He had been the first to acknowledge the divine mission of his cousin, and he ever manifested the most devoted attachment to his person. When Mohammed fled from Mecca, Ali disguised himself in the prophet's robes, and placed himself on his bed, that the Meccans might not suspect his escape. When he followed his patron to Medina, he married the prophet's favourite daughter Fatima, by whom he had several children. Mohammed on many occasions showed a strong love for Ali; he appointed him his lieutenant in his first expedition against the Greeks, at Tabúc, and during occasional absence, intrusted to him the government of Medina. It is supposed, on very plausible grounds, that Ali was actually nominated his successor by the prophet, but that Ayesha prevented the circumstance from being known. This injustice was deeply felt by the son of Abu Táleb and his partisans, but paaticularly by Mohammed's relations, who thought themselves

neglected by the three first Kaliphs. In vain, however, did his friends endeavour to persuade Ali to attempt the forcible seizure of the reins of government; he replied constantly, that he would never reign except by the free suffrages of the Mussulmans. During the reign of Omar, his loyalty was so notorious, that he was appointed governor of Arabia during the Khaliph's absence at Jerusalem; he refused to join those who conspired against Othman, and one of his sons was severely wounded in defence of that sovereign. Finally, when elected, he very reluctantly consented to accept the dignity of Khaliph, which had twice already proved fatal to its possessors. Though the character of Ali was ardent and impetuous, his disposition was mild, and his temper placable; he was deficient in that prudence so necessary in a sovereign, especially at the stormy period in which he reigned; repeated disappointments had in some degree soured his temper, he regarded himself as the victim of long injustice, and viewed with no favourable regards, the great body of Mussulmans that had so long supported his rivals. These sentiments were unwisely strengthened by the inconsiderate zeal of the greater proportion of his friends; they regarded his elevation as identified with their own, and hurried him into imprudent measures, which ruined him and themselves.

Ali commenced his reign by deposing all the governors of the provinces. Amongst these were several men of great influence; especially Moáwiyah the son of that Abu Sofián, who had been long the chief of the Meccan idolaters, and

the most bitter enemy of Mohammed. After Mecca had submitted, Mohammed made Moáwiyah one of his private secretaries; the Khaliph Omar had raised him to the government of Syria, and he had now ruled that important province during fifteen years. Crafty, subtle, intriguing, possessing inflexible obstinacy, and boundless ambition, he received Ali's mandate for his deposition with violent indignation. As he was a near relation of Othman, he resolved to declare himself his avenger, and though that soverign had left children, Moáwiyah claimed to be his heir and successor. He found allies in the centre of Arabia; while the Syrians were preparing to take arms, Ayesha, with a numerous body of followers, was already in the field. Though she had notoriously shared in the conspiracy against Othman, she now proclaimed herself his avenger, and she denounced Ali as the author of his death.

Joint with her were Talha and Zobeir, two of Mohammed's old companions, who well knew the falsehood of Ayesha's allegations. They had been the foremost to swear alligiance to Ali, but not having obtained all that they desired, they ranged themselves in the ranks of the rebels to whom their presence gave additional confidence. The obligation of their oaths they evaded by the expiatory offerings prescribed in the fifth chapter of the Korán, which is one of the greatest blots on the character both of the book and its author.

Ayesha contrary to the established custom of Arabia, led her forces in person, mounted on a strong camel, and protected by an escort of

picked men. When she approached a small village named Jowáb, all the dogs in the place rushed out and barked at her with great fury. This she regarded as an evil omen, and declared that Mohammed had told her, "One of my "wives, engaged in an evil design, shall be at-"tacked by dogs in Jowáb; take care that you "be not the wicked person." Full of alarm, she wished to return; but Zobeir and Talha, knowing how important was her presence, suborned fifty false witnesses to swear that the village was never known by the name of Jowáb. As she still seemed anxious to depart, they spread a report, that the army of Ali had gained a position in their rear, and consequently that she could not return in safety. "This," say the Moslem historians, "was the first public lie told since "the promulgation of Islám."

The two armies met at Khoraiba, a place in the neighbourhood of Bassorah; Ali's forces amounted to twenty thousand men, all picked soldiers, those of Ayesha were more numerous, but they were, for the most part, raw and undisciplined levies. After a brief contest, the rebels were routed; Talha fell wounded mortally from his horse, and with his dying breath besought pardon from God for his share in the murder of Othman, and his teachery to Ali. When told of this, the generous conqueror exclaimed, that God had granted Talha time for repentance before receiving his soul into heaven. Zobeir escaped from the battle, but was overtaken by his pursuers on the road to Mecca, who cut off his head, and brought it as an acceptable present to the Khaliph. Ali expressed so much indig-

nation at the sight, that the bearers assailed him with bitter reproaches, saying, "You are the "evil genius of the Mussulmans; you consign "to hell those who deliver you from your ene-"mies, and you name those who attack your "men companions of Satan." The victory, however, could not be regarded as complete until Ayesha had been forced to submission; the strictest orders were given to respect her person, but also it was desired that no pains should be spared to make her prisoner. Seventy men had their hands cut off attempting to seize her camel by the bridle; the pavilion in which she sat, was stuck so full of arrows that it resembled a porcupine; at length a soldier cut the back sinew of the camel, the animal fell helpless on his knees, and Ayesha remained a captive. Mohammed, the son of Abú-Bekr was sent to take charge of her; she loaded him with the fiercest invectives, but he did not make any reply. When she was brought before Ali, he received her in the most courteous manner, recommended her to forbear from meddling with public affairs for the future, and sent her under a faithful escort to Medina. Thus ended the first great battle between the opponents and the partisans of Ali; it is frequently called by eastern writers "the battle of the camel" from the animal on which Ayesha rode; it was the prelude to many, and fearful scenes of slaughter.

The rebellion in Syria next engaged the attention of Ali; Moáwiyah had not only rejected his offers of accommodation, but denied his title to the Khaliphate: in order to justify this rebellion, and strike the eyes of the multitude,

Moáwiyah procured the bloody robe in which Othman was murdered, and caused it to be borne in solemn procession through the streets of Damascus. This sight so powerfully inflamed the popular passions, that though it was then the middle of summer, more than thirty thousand persons bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to taste fresh water, until they had avenged the death of Othman. Among the leading partisans of the Syrian governor was Amrú, the conqueror of Egypt, who seemed to share the general excitement, though well aware that Ali was innocent of the imputed crimes.

The hostile forces met in the plains of Saffëin, on the western bank of the Euphrates, not far from the city of Racca. Neither leader was prepared for general action, and ninety days were wasted in desultory skirmishes between divisions. His impetuous valour gave Ali the victory in most of these encounters; he challenged his rival to decide the dispute by single combat; but Moáwiyah would not venture to enter the lists. When urged to do so by Amrú, he replied, "You aspire to the Khaliphate yourself, and desire to enjoy it after I am gone." The last action at Suffëin continued all night, to the great disadvantage of the Syrians: they would have been driven from their very entrenchments, had not the crafty Moáwiyah made an appeal to the superstitious feelings of Ali's followers. He ordered some of his men to place copies of the Korán on the points of their lances, and advancing to the front of the lines, exclaim. "This is the book "that ought to decide all differences between us; "this is the word of God, and the code of our

"faith, it expressly forbids the shedding of Mos-"lem blood." Coarse as was the artifice, it had the most complete success; the troops of Irák, the flower of the Khaliph's forces threw down their arms, and clamorously demanded that a negotiation should be commenced. In vain did Ali command them to continue the fight, assuring them that Moáwiyah disregarded the Korán, and was equally the enemy of God and man; the soldiers clamorously replied, that they would not fight against the book of God, and threatened the Khaliph with the fate of Othman.

From the moment that he was checked in the midst of victory, Ali seems to have despaired of the issue of the contest; when required to name an arbitrator, he coldly answered, "He that is "not at liberty, cannot give his advice; you "must now conduct the affair as you think pro-"per." His soldiers took him at his word, and nominated on the part of the Khaliph, Abú Músa, whose chief merit was, that he had written a faulty copy of the Korán, and whose fidelity had been long more than suspected. Moáwiyah appointed a much more subtle negotiator, Amrù, universally regarded as the most able statesman of the period. The arbitratros were enjoined to decide the dispute according to the Korán and the traditions of the prophet, and to pronounce judgment in the next months of Ramadan.

Amrú persuaded Abú Mùsa that the best plan that could be adopted was to declare the throne vacant, and proceed to a new election. When the day for giving judgment arrived Abù Mùsa, as had been agreed, first ascended the pulpit and

with a loud voice pronounced the following words: "I depose both Ali and Moáwiyah "from the Khaliphate, in the same manner that "I draw this ring from my finger." Amrú next ascended, and said, "You have heard Abú Músa "pronounce the deposition of Ali: I confirm it; "and I invest Moáwiyah with the supreme "authority in the same manner that I now draw "this ring upon my finger. I hail him as the "legal successor of Othman, the avenger of his "blood, and the most worthy of the Moslems to "command the faithful."

This unexpected declaration created a violent tumult. Abú Músa accused Amrú of breach of faith, called him a wretch, a dog, an unclean beast, and imprecated on his grave all nameless desecrations; Amrú replied, that his co-arbitrator was a learned blockhead, a jackass loaded with books, and the grandfather of stupidity; at the same time, he stoutly maintained his sentence.

This event was fatal to the caus of Ali; his soldiers, who had forced him to commence the imprudent negotiation, felt that their fidelity must for the future be suspected, and began to desert in whole battalions; a great part of those who remained faithful, accused him of weakness, reproaching him for having submitted his unquestionable rights to arbitration. The new and formidable sect of the Khavaredschites, that is, "the deserters," appeared in the midst of Arabia, declaring that both the rivals had forfeited their right to reign, by submitting to human judgment what God alone should determine. It was necessary to march a large army against these fanatics, and the time which Ali wasted in their

subjugation, was employed by Moáwiyah in new conquests. It would be difficult to form an idea of the vindictive rage which filled all parties at this period. Mohammed, the son of Abù-Bekr, whose presence at the murder of Othman has been already mentioned, was a zealous partisan of Ali; he was taken prisoner by Moáwiyah, and notwithstanding the respect due to his father, and his sister Ayesha, he was sewed up in an ass's skin, and burned alive. Anathemas and curses were hurled against each other, by the rivals, at every place of public worship; every Friday, Ali, from the pulpit, proclaimed Moáwiyah a rebel, an impious wretch, an enemy of God and his prophet; while the Syrian governor treated the name of Ali with equal contumely. But Moáwiyah did not confine himself to a war of malediction; he gained some advantage over his rival almost every day; subdued his provinces, defeated his armies, corrupted his ministers, and procured the destruction of those who remained faithful to his falling fortunes. Among those who deserted the cause of the unfortunate, was Okail, Ali's brother; his only excuse for this infamous act was, that he had not been treated with sufficient respect.

We have already mentioned the view taken of affairs, by the fanatical Khavaredschites. Three of this sect happened to meet at Mecca, and after some discourse ageed, that if the three chief causes of discontent were removed, namely, Ali, Moáwiyah, and Amrú, the affairs of the Mussulmans would soon be restored to their ancient flourishing condition. Finally, they resolved to devote themselves for the common

advantage, and agreed, that on a stated day, one should slay Ali at Cufa; another, Moáwiyah at Damascus; and the third, Amrú in Egypt. The attempt was made; Amrú on that day did not appear in public; Moáwiyah escaped with a few slight wounds; Ali alone received a mortal stroke. The assassin on his arrival at Cufa, went to lodge with a woman, whose brother and husband had been slain by the Khaliph's soldiers in battle. She was eager to avenge their death; she promised her hand to the assassin, if he succeeded, and persuaded, two of her friends to aid him in the attempt.

Scarcely had Ali entered the mosque, when the three threw themselves on him together, and wounded him in several places; one escaped, the other was slain by the guards; the third was brought a prisoner before Ali. "What could have induced thee to attempt such atrocious crime?" asked the dying prince. "I wished to avenge the calamities you have brought upon the faithful," was the stern reply. Ali survived his wounds only three days: it is a curious fact, that his death took place towards the close of the thirty years, which Mohammed had predicted would be the fatal period of the Khaliphate.

Ali ordered, that if he survived his wounds, the life of the assassin should be spared; "but if I die," he continued, "send him after me, that I may have an opportunity of accusing him before the throne of God." After the Khaliph's death, the hands and feet of the wretch were cut off; his eyes burned out with hot irons; his tongue torn from the roots, and his mutilated body cast into the flames. Such was the fana-

ticism of the times, that a poet dared to celebrate the detestable murder of Ali, in stanzas to the following effect :

O God ! how truly noble was the deed,
Which from a wicked king thy chosen freed.
O worthy blow ! dealt by a noble hand ;
O stroke, which Heaven's high favour must command !
To thee avenger, humbly shall I pray
When call'd to answer at the judgment-day :
Thy glorious deed shall then with weight prevail,
And turn the balance of the awful scale.

Moáwiyah and his successors, long continued to curse Ali as an usurper after his death ; he was denounced in every mosque subject to their sway, as worse than an infidel. The Khaliph Omar, son of Abd-al-aziz sixty years after, resolved to put an end to this scandal ; but to prevent any discontent among his followers, he devised the following expedient : A Jew, according to a concerted plan, appeared in the hall of audience, when crowded with the Saracenic nobility, and demanded the daughter of the Khaliph in marriage. Omar pretended to shudder with horror, while a hundred voices were raised to denounce the audacity of the proposal. The Jew continued : " Your prophet Mohammed " gave his beloved child to one, who according " to your accounts was worse than the worst of " infidels ; why should you hesitate to grant me " yours !" The Khaliph pretended to be embarrassed by the reply, and looked for advice to his council. Most of those present, were of opinion that an insult was offered to Mohammed himself, by prononncing a curse on his son-in-law ; and it was resolved, that for the future, instead of the anathema, the following verse of the Korán

should be used: "forgive us, Lord, our sins, "pardon likewise all our brethren, who make "profession of the same faith that we do our-"selves." But the successors of Omar, as we shall see in the next chapter, did not imitate him in respecting the misfortunes of the house of Ali.

Ali possessed great military talents, but no political skill. Speaking of their contest, Moáwiyah said, "Two things gave me the advantage, "—my rival was of an open disposition, I was "impenetrable; Ali commanded undisciplined "troops, mine obeyed the slightest signal." He possessed a more than ordinary share of the learning of the times; frequently recited extempore stanzas, and always displayed a ready eloquence. A copy of a treatise written by him, on the magical sciences, is said to be preserved in the imperial library of Constantinople.

The respect which the Schiites have for the memory of Ali, borders on idolatry, but this will be more appropriately noticed in the next chapter. All the Mussulmans, however, now join in commiserating his calamities, and blaming the violence of which he was the victim. Every time that they pronounce his name, they accompany it with the benediction, "May God render his face glorious."

From the contest between Ali and Moáwiyah, the first of the Ommiad Khaliphs, arose the distinction of the Mohammedans into Sonnites and Schiites. The chief points at issue between them, are the following: 1. The Schiites, or as they call themselves, the Adalyihans, or "lovers of justice;" assert that the three first Khaliphs

were usurpers; the Sonnites declare that they were legitimate monarchs, elected according to the *sonna*, or traditional law of the prophet. 2. The Schiites, regard Ali as the equal of Mohammed; some even assert his superiority, but the Sonnites deny that he possessed any special dignity. 3. The Schiites assert that the Korán is made void by the authority attributed to tradition; the Sonnites say that tradition is necessary to complete and explain the doctrines of the Korán.

The Turks, Egyptians, and Arabs belong to the Sonnite sect; the tenets of the Schiites are professed by the Persians, a great portion of the Tartars, and several of the Mohammedan princes in India.

Ali was buried at Cufa, but the exact place of his sepulchre cannot be determined. A magnificent mosque has been erected in the neighbourhood of the city, which is called Musjid-Ali, the place of Ali's martyrdom; it is, to this day, a favourite object of pilgrimage to devout Mussulmans.

The history of the celebrate Timùr furnishes us with two curious examples of the desire which the Schiites show to avenge the fate of their patron. When this ferocious conqueror, whose pleasure it was to enter into lengthened controversy with his captives, and to call himself the friend of Ali's family, had conquered Aleppo, he assembled all the Mohammedan doctors in the city, knowing them to be Sonnites, and demanded of them, "What think you of Ali, of Moáwiyah, and his son Yezid?" They remained long in silence, fearing to compromise them-

selves; at length, one of them evasively replied, "All those whom you mention, contended for "the true faith, and extended the glory of God." Tamerlane instantly burst into a fury, and exclaimed, "Ali was the rightful Khaliph and Imám, "the legitimate sovereign of the faithful: Moá-"wiyah was a tyrant and usurper, his son Yezid "a monster of iniquity. It seems that you per-"severe in the iniquity of your forefathers, who "supported the cause of the abandoned Yezid, "the cruel murderer of Hossein (Ali's son)." And this served as a pretext for refusing the doctors of the law at Aleppo the usual exemption from military execution.

Timúr anxious to represent the desolation that he spread over Syria, as a punishment inflicted by the Divine command on a guilty land, repeated the same question at Damascus. Not receiving an answer, he informed his soldiers that they were commissioned to punish the Syrians for the impious wars that they had waged against Ali and his descendants. Thus the stimulus of fanaticism was added to their former cruelty and barbarity.

It must, however be added, in justice, that on one occasion, this predilection, of Timúr, led him to perform an act of mercy; when his great enemy SheikhAli had been completely defeated, and driven forth from his home as a fugitive, Timúr, as he tells us himself, in his extraordinary autobiography,* pardoned him for the sake of the name he bore, and permitted him to return, and enjoy his paternal inheritance.

* It is called the *Mulfuzat-Timury*; and has been translated by Major Charles Stewart. The Institutes of Timúr were previously translated and published in Oxford.

The progress of the Mohammedan creed was, we have said, singularly rapid, under the first four Khaliphs; and we have attributed this to the fact of its having been admirably adapted to the wants and wishes of those to whom it was preached. Of this, we have a very curious proof in the autobiography of Timúr, a work of extraordinary interest; published by the Oriental Translation Committee. Teragay, the father of the imperial author, gives his son the following account of the motives that induced a Tartar emir to adopt the Mohammedan creed; it will be seen that they are such as would naturally suggest themselves to the natives of central and western Asia.

"The first of our family who had the honour " of conversion to the faith of Islám, was Kera- " chār-Nuyan, who was the son-in-law of Jagtay- " Khān; as he was a sensible man, he of his " own accord adopted the faith of Mohammed, " and said to his family and people, 'When I look " around me in the universe, I see but one world, " yet I am of opinion that there are other worlds " besides this; but I am also convinced, that " there is only one God who hath created all " these worlds, and who is all-sufficient to rule " and direct all these worlds; but as he has " chosen this world as his special dominion, he " has deemed it requisite to have ministers (to " instruct mankind); he hath, therefore, chosen " Mohammed to be his *Vizier* in this world, and " as it was requisite that Mohammed should " have ministers (to extend his religion), he hath " appointed the holy race of Khalifs to this " dignity.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE FAMILY OF ALI.—THE TWELVE IMAMS.

How frequently we find in the ancient Persian religion, the notion of a *Bodhisatwa*, or union in the same person of the Divine and the human nature. We have also mentioned, that the sect of Mohammedans devoted to Ali, is that which the Persians have adopted. When the faith of Islám was forced upon the Persian nation by the sanguinary Omar, it was declared by the conqueror, that all who did not receive it with implicit obedience, should be put to the sword. Such a summary process of conversion left the real tenets of the great majority of the nation unaltered; from old associations, they began to regard the Imáms or chiefs of the faith, as Bodhisatwas; and as we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, this principle pervades all the Schiite sects; the chief difference between them being as to the number of incarnations. Ali is reckoned to be the first Imám; his partisans declare that, though human force prevented him from enjoying temporal power, his spiritual dignity was the gift of God, and could not, therefore, be affected by the successive usurpations of Abú-Bekr, Omar, and Othman. The Schiite notion of an Imám, is precisely the same as that which the Tibetians form of their Grand Lama, and the Burmese of their Bodhisatwas. Many think that Ali is not dead, but that he will return again to reign upon earth, when men, by their docility and submission, will cause him to forget

the calamities which he had to suffer in his former career. Others, identifying him with the Divinity, pretend, that he often shows himself in the clouds to the enemies of his name, "brandishing the lightnings of heaven in their faces, and terrifying their souls by the crashes of his thunder." It is quite a common proverb in Persia, "Though I do not believe Ali to be God, I believe that he is not far from being so." In all portraits of him, he is represented with his face covered, because, as they allege, the glory of his countenance is too bright for mortal eye to behold.

A great number of the Schiites declare the first Imám superior to the Prophet; some say, that Ali was chosen by God to propagate Islámism, but that the angel Gabriel, by mistake, delivered the letter to Mohammed. Others pretend that Mohammed was ordered to deliver his revelations in Ali's name, but that, seduced by pride and ambition, he falsely proclaimed himself the chosen apostle of God. Sháh Hossein, one of the last monarchs of the Suffanean dynasty in "Persia, described himself on his seal, as the vilest of the dogs of Ali." The signet of several other monarchs of this dynasty, bore a Persian quatrain to the following effect:—

He who in Ali places not his trust,
  Were it myself, myself I should detest.
He who at Ali's gate is not as dust,
  On him, though Gabriel's self, may earth be press'd.

But the following version of a popular Persian hymn to Ali, will show the reader, better than any dissertation, the absurd and blasphem-

ous lengths to which the Schiites carry their reverence for the first Imám.

Beside thy glories, O most great!
Dim are the stars and weak is fate.
Compar'd to thy celestial light,
The very sun is dark as night,
Thine edicts destiny obeys,
The sun shows but thy mental rays.

Thy merits form a boundless sea
That rolls on to eternity:
To heaven its mighty waves ascend,
O'er it the skies admiring bend,
And when they view its waters clear,
The wells of Eden dark appear.

The treasures that the earth conceals,
The wealth that human toil reveals,
The jewels of the gloomy mine,
Those that on regal circlets shine;
Are idle toys and worthless shows,
Compar'd with what thy grace bestows.

Mysterious being! None can tell
The attributes in thee that dwell;
None can thine essence comprehend;
To thee should every mortal bend—
For 'tis by thee that man is given
To know the high behests of heaven.

The ocean-floods round earth that roll,
And lave the shores from pole to pole,—
Beside the eternal fountain's stream
A single drop, a bubble seem:
That fount's a drop beside the sea
Of grace and love, we find in Thee.

On the death of Ali (A. D. 661), his eldest son Hassan was proclaimed Khaliph and Imám in Irák; the former title he was forced to resign to Moáwiyah, the latter, or spiritual dignity, his followers regarded as inalienable. His rival

granted him a pension, and permitted him to retire into private life. After nine years passed, for the most part in devotional exercise, he was poisoned by his wife Jaadah, who was bribed to perpetrate this execrable crime by Yezid, the son of Moáwiyah. When he was at the point of death, the physician told his brother Hossein, that his bowels were consumed with poison. Hossein demanded of Hassan to name the murderer, that such a crime might not escape unpunished; but the dying prince replied, "O, "brother! the life of this world is made up of "nights that vanish away. Let the murderer "alone, until we both meet at the judgment-"seat of God, where justice will assuredly be "done." The second Imám was a feeble prince: of his father's good qualities, he only inherited his piety and his merciful disposition. It is reported, that when he surrendered his dignity to Moáwiyah, he proposed that the anathemas pronounced against his father in the mosques should be discontinued, but that he had afterwards the weakness to stipulate only that they should not be pronounced in his presence. Hence, one party have named him "disgrace of the Mussulmans," while the ardent Schiites call him "the young prince of Paradise."

Most Mohammedan writers, date the commencement of Moáwiyah's reign from the abdication of Hassan (A. D. 669), and declare that this is the term of the period during which the world was subject to legitimate authority; regarding the four first Khaliphs as monarchs *de jure*, and all others as only sovereigns *de facto*. According to the Schiite doctrine, Hossein, the

second son of Ali and Fatima, inherited the dignity of Imám. He had been born prematurely, which some of his followers represented as a miraculous circumstance; Mohammed had shown great affection for him in infancy, and some say, predicted for him good fortune which he never attained. Hossein had endeavoured to dissuade Hassan from resigning in favour of Moáwiyah, but when the treaty was concluded, he was foremost in showing the example of obedience. Not only did he regularly attend to pay his respects at the court of Damascus, but he actually served in the Khaliph's army when the Saracens made their first attack on Constantinople. On the death of Moáwiyah (A. D. 679), his son Yezid, who succeeded, having provoked public indignation by his luxury, debauchery, and impiety, Hossein was persuaded by the discontented people of Irák, to make an attempt for the recovery of his hereditary rights. The inhabitants of Cufa and Bassorah were foremost in their professions of zeal for the house of Ali, and sent Hossein a list of more than one hundred and twenty-four thousand persons, who, they said were ready to take up arms. Hossein did not take warning from the inconstancy and treachery which these very persons had shown in their conduct towards his father and brother; assembling a small troop of his personal friends, and accompanied by a part of his family, he departed from Medina, the place of his residence, and was soon engaged in crossing the desert. But whilst he was on his journey, Yezid's governor in Irák discovered the meditated revolt, capitally punished the leaders of the conspiracy, and so terrified the

rest, that they were afraid to move. When Hossein arrived near the banks of the Euphrates, instead of finding an allied army, he discovered that his further progress was checked by the overhelming forces of the enemy. Determined, however, to persevere, he gave permission to all who pleased, to retreat while there was yet time, and continued his route to Cufa, accompanied only by seventy-two persons. But every step increased his difficulties, and he attempted to return when it was too late. At length, he was surrounded by the troops of the Khaliph in the arid plains of Kerbela, his followers were cut off from their supply of water, and when he offered to negotiate, he was told that no terms would be made, but that he should surrender at discretion. Twenty-four hours were granted him for deliberation. Hassein's choice was soon made, he deemed death preferable to submission; but he counselled his friends to provide for their safety, either by surrender or escape. All replied, that they preferred dying with their beloved leader. The only matter now to be considered was, how they could sell their lives most dearly; they closed their tents, fortified their little encampment with a trench, and then tranquilly awaited the event.

That night Hossein slept soundly, using for a pillow the pommel of his sword. During his sleep, he dreamed that Mohammed appeared to him, and predicted that they should meet the next day in Paradise. When morning dawned, he related the dream to his sister Zainab, who had accompanied him on his fatal expedition. She burst into a passion of tears, and exclaimed,

"Alas! alas! Woe worth the day! What a "destiny is ours! My father is dead! My mother "is dead! My brother Hassan is dead! and the "measure of our calamities is not yet full." Hossein tried to console her: "Why should you "weep?" he said; "Did we not come on "earth to die? My father was more worthy "than I—my Mother was more worthy than I "—my brother was more worthy than I. They "are all dead! Why should not we be ready to "follow their example!" He then strictly enjoined his family to make no lamentation for his approaching martyrdom; telling them that a patient submission to the Divine decrees was the conduct most pleasing to God and his prophet.

When morning appeared, Hossein, having washed and perfumed himself, as if preparing for a banquet, mounted his steed, and addressed his followers in terms of endearing affection that drew tears from the eyes of the gallant warriors. Then opening the Korán, he read the following verse: "O God! be thou my refuge in suffering, "and my hope in affliction." But the soldiers of Yezid were reluctant to assail the favourite grandson of the prophet; they demanded of their generals to allow him to draw water from the Euphrates, a permission which would not have been refused to beasts and infidels. "Let us be cautious," they exclaimed "of raising our "hands against him who was carried in the arms "of God's apostle; it would be, in fact, to fight "against God himself." So strong were their feelings, that thirty cavaliers deserted to Hossein, resolved to share with him the glories of martyrdom.

But Yezid's generals shared not in these sentiments, they affected to regard Hossein as an enemy of Islám; they forced their soldiers forwards with blows, and exclaimed, "War to those "who abandon the true religion, and separate "themselves from the council of the faithful." Hossein replied, "It is you who have aban-"doned the true religion, it is you who have "severed yourselves from the assembly of the "faithful. Ah! when your souls shall be se-"parated from your bodies, you will learn, too "late, which party has incurred the penalty of "eternal condemnation." Notwithstanding their vast superiority, the Khaliph's forces hesitated to engage men determined on death; they poured in their arrows from a distance, and soon dismounted the little troop of Hossein's cavalry.

When the hour of noon arrived, Hossein solicited a suspension of arms during the time appointed for the meridian prayer. This trifling boon was conceded with difficult; the generals of Yezid asking, "How a wretch like him "could venture to address the Deity?" and adding the vilest reproaches, to which Hossein made no reply. The Persian traditions relate a fabulous circumstance, designed to exalt the character of Hossein, though fiction itself cannot increase the deep interest of his history. They tell us, that whilst he was upon his knees, the king of the Genii appeared to him, and offered, for the sake of his father Ali, to disperse his enemies in a moment. "No," replied the generous Hossein, "what use is there in fighting any longer? "I am but a guest of one breath in this transitory "world; my relatives and companions are all

"gone, and what will it profit me to remain "behind; I long for nothing, now save my "martyrdom; therefore, depart thou, and may "the Lord recompense and bless thee." The Ginn was so deeply affected by the reply, that his soul exhibited human weakness, and he departed weeping and lamenting.

When the hour of prayer was passed, the combat was renewed; Hossein soon found himself alone; one of his sons, six of his brethren, and several of his nephews, lay dead around him; the rest of his followers were either killed or grievously wounded. Hitherto he had escaped unhurt, for every one dreaded to raise a hand against the grandson of Mohammed; at length a soldier, more daring than the rest, gave him a severe wound in the head; faint with the loss of blood he staggered to the door of his tent, and with a burst of parental affection, which at such a moment must have been mingled with unspeakable bitterness, took up his infant child and began to caress it. Whilst the babe was lisping out an inquiry as to the cause of his father's emotion, it was struck dead by an arrow in Hossein's arms. When the blood of the innocent bubbling over his bosom, disclosed this new calamity, Hossein cast the body towards heaven, exclaiming, "O "Lord! if thou refusest us thy succour, at least "spare those who have not yet sinned, and turn "thy wrath upon the heads of the guilty."

Parched by a burning thirst, Hossein made a desperate effort to reach the Euphrates; but when he stooped to drink, he was struck by an arrow in the mouth, and at the same moment one of his nephews, who came to embrace him

for the last time, had his hand cut off by the blow of a sabre. Hossein, now the sole survivor of his party, threw himself into the midst of the enemy, and fell beneath a thousand weapons. The officers of Yezid barbarously mangled the corpse of the unfortunate prince; they cut off his head, and sent it to the Khaliph.

On the third day aftr the battle, Hossein's two sisters, and his only surviving son Ali, were sent to Syria; Yezid at first treated them very harshly, but finding that this conduct excited the general indignation of his subjects, he allowed them to return home. When they reached Medina, the whole city was filled with mouruing; one of Hossein's cousins recited an ode reproaching the Medinese for not having protected the family of Mohammed; though its poetic merits were not great, it produced a very powerful effect. The following is a translation of this singular composition:—

Tell me, friends, what shall you say,
On the awful judgment-day?
When Mohammed asks you, "Where
"Are those trusted to your care?
"Where his offspring—where his wives—
"Deearer than a thousand lives?"

Bound by many a festering chain,
Some in dungeons dark remain;
On Kerbela's barren strand
Others lie, a reeking band,
Torn with wounds and stain'd with mud,
Weltering in their own heart's blood.

When before the judgment-seat
You the holy prophet meet,
He shall ask, if thus you show
The gratitude you justly owe,

For all the benefits bestow'd
By him whose bounty freely flow'd.

The death of Hossein was severely revenged; most of those who shared in his murder perished miserably, and the treatment he received was the pretence for several insurrections. One insurgent chief, Al Mokhtár, boasted that he had immolated fifty thousand enemies of the house of Ali.

The anniversary of Hossein's martyrdom, in the month Mohurrum, is celebrated with extraordinary splendour both in Persia and India. The solemnity lasts ten days, during which the Schiites abstain from every thing that could suggest notions of joy or pleasure. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, in her highly interesting portraiture of Mohammedanism in India, gives a graphic description of the Mohurrum, from which we extract the following curious particulars:—

"I have been present," says the fair authoress, "when the effect produced by the superior oratory and gestures of a Maulvee (reading the history of the house of Ali), has almost terrified me; the profound grief evinced in his tears and groans, being piercing and apparently sincere. I have even witnessed blood issuing from the breasts of sturdy men, who beat themselves simultaneously as they ejaculated the names 'Hassan!' 'Hossein!' for ten minutes, and occasionally for a longer period, in that part of the service called Mortem.".... In commemorating this remarkable event in Mussulman history, the expressions of grief manifested by the ladies, are far greater, and appear to me more lasting, than with the other sex: indeed, I never could have given credit to the

"extent of their bewailings, without witnessing, "as I have done for many years, the season for "tears and profound grief return with the month "of Mohurrum. In sorrowing for the martyred "Imáms they seem to forget their private griefs, "the bereavement of a beloved object even is "almost overlooked, in the dutiful remembrance "of Hassan and Hossein at this season; and I "have had opportunities of observing this tri- "umph of religious feelings in women who are "remarkable for their affectionate attachment "to their children, husbands, and parents:—they "tell me, 'we must not indulge selfish sorrows "of our own, whilst the prophet's family alone "have a right to our tears.'......My poor old "Ayah (maid-servant) resolves on not allowing "a drop of water, or any liquid, to pass her "lips during the ten days' mourning; as she "says,—'Her Imám, Hossein, and his family, "suffered from thirst at Kerbela, why should "such a creature as she is, be indulged with "water?' This shows the temper of the people "generally; my Ayah is a very ignorant old "woman, yet she respects the memory of her "Imám."

A magnificent mosque was erected over the place where the body of Hossein was interred; the place is named *Musjid Hossein*, that is "the place of Hossein's martyrdom;" it is to this day a favourite resort of pilgrims. The Schiites devoutly believe that the martyr's head, after having worked several miracles, went from Egypt and joined itself to his body in Kerbela; one of the days of Mohurrum is dedicated to the commemoration of this event. A curious

tradition respecting Hossein's head has been preserved by Imám Ismail: "When Hossein's head was sent to be presented to Yezid, the escort that guarded it, halting for the night in the city of Mosul, placed it in a box, which they locked up in a temple. One of the sentinels, in the midst of the night, looking through a chink in one of the doors, saw a man of immense stature, with a white and venerable beard, take Hossein's head out of the box, kiss it affectionately, and weep over it. Soon after, a crowd of venerable sages arrived, each of whom kissed the pallid lips and wept bitterly." Fearing that these people might convey the head away, he unlocked the door and entered. Immediately, one of the number came up, gave him a violent slap on the face, and said, "The prophets have "come to pay a morning-visit to the head of "the martyr. Whither dost thou venture so "disrespectfully?"—The blow left a black mark on his cheek. In the morning he related the circumstances to the commander of the escort, and showed his cheek, on which the impression of the hand and fingers was plainly perceptible.

Hossein was naturally of a dark and melancholy disposition, as if he had some presentiment of his untimely end. He was like his father, remarkable for piety; his biographers say, that he paid his adorations to the Most High a thousand times every day. He once asked his father if he loved him; Ali replied, that he loved him tenderly. Again he asked, "Dost thou love God?" Ali answered in the affirmative. Upon this Hossein said, "Two true affections cannot subsist together in the same heart." Ali was so

moved by these words, that he burst into a passion of tears. Hossein, to comfort him, continued, "Whether would you rather be guilty "of infidelity or witness my death?" Ali replied, "I would sooner deliver up my beloved son to "death, than abandon the faith." "Then," said Hossein, "by this test, you may see that your "love for me, is only natural affection, but that "you love God, with the true love of the inmost "soul."

Ali, the son of Hossein, was the fourth Imám; though during his youth, the friends of his family seemed disposed to regard his uncle Mohammed Hanifa as their chief. Ali was about twelve years of age when he accompanied his father to the fatal field of Kerbela. So deep an impression did this disaster make upon his mind, that he refused to take any share in public affairs, and dissuaded his friends from making any efforts in his favour. During his retirement, the people of Medina revolted against Yezid, who sent a powerful army under Meslem Ebn Okba to suppress the rebellion. Meslem took the city by assault, and gave it to be plundered by his soldiers; the surviving companions of the prophet and their children were put to the sword, and all who had taken an active part in the insurrection were cruelly butchered. Mecca was besieged, and part of its celebrated temple destroyed; it would have shared the fate of Medina, had not the news of the Khaliph's death recalled the army to Syria. By Yezid's special directions, Meslem treated Ali with all possible respect, and sent him, escorted by a guard of honour, to a place of safety. The remainder of the

Imám's life was spent in devotional exercises; from his constancy in prayer, he has been named "the Imám of the carpet," because the Mussulmans usually kneel on a square piece of carpet; "the possessor of callosities," from his body having become deformed through his frequent devotional prostrations, and "the glory of pious men." He died, greatly reverenced but little known (A. D. 712), and was succeeded by his eldest son Mohammed.

The life of Mohammed, the fifth Imám, was as tranquil and retired as that of his predecessors; he devoted himself to the study of the sciences, and of course, was supposed, in an age of ignorance, to have paid particular attention to magic. For these reasons, the Schiites call him, "the possessor of the secret," and "the extensive;" they also name him "the director," because in an age of heresy, he directed the Mussulmans in the right path. During this period, Persian Mohammedanism was further corrupted by the introduction of new Buddhistic ideas. The doctrine of the metempsychosis, or the transmigration of the soul of one Chief of Religion into that of his successor, was applied to the Imáms, as it has been from unknown time, to the Lamas of Tibet. The Khaliph Heshám, alarmed at the progress of opinions which gave additional strength to the house of Ali, procured the murder of Mohammed by poison (A. D. 734.) Some of the Schiites, however, believe that he is not yet dead, but that he wanders secretly over the earth, accompanied by Ali Ebn Táleb, and the celebrated prophet Kheder.

Jaafar the sixth Imám, succeeded to the spiri-

tual dignity of his father Mohammed, Zeid, the brother of the late Imám, resolved to restore the temporal power of the house of Ali; and assembling an army of more than ten thousand men in Irák, made himself master of Cúfa. But he found the Cúfans as unstable and faithless as they had proved in the time of his ancestors, Hossein and Ali. On the approach of the Khaliph's troops, commanded by Yusef Ebn Omar, they sought a pretext for abandoning Zeid, and demanded of him, what were his sentiments respecting Abú-Bekr and Omar? He replied, that he always had regarded them as good men. Upon this, they pretended, that he entertained heretical sentiments, and consequently, had no right to their allegiance. Zeid had only fourteen companions when he was surrounded by the army of Yusef; even in these desperate circumstances, he refused to surrender, but fell, gallantly fighting at the head of his brave companions, none of whom survived him. Yusef treated the senseless corpse with brutal indignity; Zeid's head was sent to the Khaliph, by whose command, it was fixed on the walls of Damascus; his body, after being some time exposed on a gibbet was burned, and the ashes scattered to the winds.

Soon after this, the dynasty of the Ommyad Khaliphs was subverted, and Merwán, the last sovereign of the family, slain in Egypt. The Khaliphate was transferred to the Abasside family, descended from Al-Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed. Al Saffah, the new Khaliph, was as jealous of the house of Ali, as the descendants of Moáwiyah had been, and the Imáms continued to be exposed to suspicion and persecution.

We are told by the Schiites, that Jaafar's knowledge was little, if at all, inferior to that of Solomon; they say, that he wrote a supplement to the "Book of Fate," originally composed by Ali, and they still seek in its pages the interpretation of omens and prodigies. So great is their veneration for him, that an entire seet has been denominated Jaafarites, from their strong attachment to his memory. When the celebrated Nadir Shah, proposed to assimilate the religion of the Persians to that of the Turks, and render the Schiite system a fifth orthodox sect, he proposed that the Imám Jaafar should be regarded as the head of the national faith; his efforts failed, as all efforts to conciliate rival creeds have uniformly done. Jaafar used to say to his disciples; "Converse with me whilst I remain amongst "you, hereafter you shall have no one to give "you instruction." From this circumstance many of his disciples believed that he did not die, but was only removed from human sight like Edris and Kheder. Jaafar is commonly termed "the just," and "the brave prince," he is a favourité hero of Oriental romance. He died A. D. 765.

We have now reached the celebrated age of the seventh Imám when from among the Schiites, issued a new sect, whose history is without a paralled in the annals of the world. Jaafar nominated his son Ismail his successor, but, on his premature death, he declared his second son Moussa his heir. Now, as Ismail had left children, those of the Shiites who regarded the Imámate as hereditary, denied that Jaafar had a right to make a second nomination; they formed a

new sect called the Ismaelians, to which belonged the Fatimite Khaliphs of Egypt, who pretended to be descended from this Ismail, and the Assassins or followers of the Old Man of the Mountain, whose name was once so justly dreaded in Europe and Asia.

The Suffavean monarchs of Persia claiming to be descended from Moussa, have strenuously advocated his title to be the seventh Imám, and with such success, that no traces of the contrary opinion are now to be found in Persia. Soon after the accession of Moussa, an unsuccessful attempt to restore the temporal power of the house of Ali, in which he had no share, became to him the pregnant source of many calamities. Yáhya, a descendant of Hassan, the eldest son of Ali,* was persuaded to raise the standard of revolt against the Khaliph Haroun-al-Raschid, in the province of Ghilán; and several of the discontented flocked to his standard. Haroun sent a large army under the command of Fadl, a general of the Barmecide family, against the insurgents. Yáhya surrendered on condition of receiving pardon and indemnity, which were readily conceded by the Khaliph. Yáhya removed to Bagdad, but was subsequently put to death by the suspicious monarch, having been falsely accused of meditating a new revolt. The historians add, that all his accusers were Providentially punished by a miserable end. This was not the only instance in which Haroun exhibited the cruelty of cowardice; he seized

* His genealogy is thus given by the historians: Yáhya, the son of Abd-allah, the son of Hassan II., the son of Hassan I., the son of Ali, the son of Abú-Taleb.

Moussa at Medina, had him conveyed in a covered litter to Bagdad, and after keeping him some time in confinement, caused him to be privately assassinated. Moussa is by some of the Schiites denominated "the weak," and by others, "the patient;" others, alluding to the persecutions he experienced, call him "the faithful guardian of the true belief." He was put to death, A. D. 799; it is a curious proof of the deference paid by the Khaliph to public opinion, that an inquest was held on the body of Moussa, the commissioners of which were bribed to return a false verdict.

Moussa's son Ali was the eighth Imám; he had accompanied his father to Bagdad, where he made several proselytes; and among others the grand vizier of the empire Al Fadl Ebn-Sahal. Through the vizier's influence, the Khaliph Al Mamún, the son of Haroun, invited Ali to court, gave him his daughter in marriage, and proclaimed him his successor in the empire. Moreover he commanded his troops to lay aside their black dress, the distinctive uniform of the house of Abbas, and to assume the green vests that characterize the descendants of Mohammed. Expresses announcing this change were sent to different parts of the empire. The descendants of Abbas, amounting, it is said, to thirty thousand souls, were filled with indignation; they resolved to depose Al Mamún, and proclaim his uncle Ibrahim emperor of the faithful. In consequence of this alarming intelligence, the Khaliph caused his vizier to be assasinated, and Ali to be privately poisoned. Ali died in the city of Tús in Khorassan; his tomb is denominated Musjid Ali, and since the period of the

Suffavean dynasty has been a favourite object of pilgrimage to the Persians. Those monarchs proclaimed, that a pilgrimage thither was as meritorious as one to Mecca; crowds came in consequence from every quarter, a new city named Mesched sprung up around the sepulchre, and Tús deserted by its inhabitants, fell into decay. The murder of Ali occurred (A. D. 816;) from the Schiites he has received the epithet " beloved."

Mohammed, the son of Ali, was the ninth Imám; he lived in privacy at Bagdad, where he died at an early age (A. D. 835.) On account of his great charity and benevolence, he is named " the generous."

Ali, the tenth Imám, was but a child when he succeded his father, he was kept a close prisoner all his life in the city of Asker, by the Khaliph Motawakkel, the mortal enemy of the Schiites. To avoid suspicion, he pretended to devote himself entirely to study and religious exercises; but notwithstanding his caution, the jealous Khaliph ordered him to be poisoned (A. D. 868.) From the place of his residence Ali is commonly called " the Askerit." This name is also given to his son and successor Hassan, who likewise perished by poison. Hassan bears in addition, the title of " liberator," because it was hoped he would have delivered his followers from the tyranny of the Khaliphs; he is likewise called, " the pure," in allusion to his inoffensive life, and " the torch," in reference to his brilliant literary talents.

Mohammed, the twelfth and last Imám, was but six months old when his father died; he was

kept closely confined by the Khaliph, but after he had attained the age of twelve years he suddenly disappeared. The Sunnites say that he was drowned in the Tigris, (A. D. 879,) and show what they say, probably with truth, is his tomb. The Schiites universally deny the fact of his death; they say, that he wanders unknown over the earth until the predestined moment shall arrive, when he shall claim and receive universal empire.

The belief in the eternal existence of the last Imám is common to several Schiite sects; the Nosairians stop at Ali the first Imám, the Ismaelians at the seventh, the Druses give the title to Hamza, whose descent from Ali, however, is equivocal, but the great majority acknowledge twelve Imáms. They all say, that the earth will not have a legitimate sovereign until the re-appearance of the last Imám. The Persian king of the Suffavean dynasty, or the Sophis, as they were anciently called in England, styled themselves "slaves of the lord of the country," that is of the invisible Imám; they always kept two horses bridled and saddled in the royal stables at Ispahan, one for the twelfth Imám, whenever he should appear, the other for Jesus Christ, by whom they belived that he would be accompanied. Impostors have frequently appeared, who called themselve the last Imám, or Imám Mahdi, that is "the directed," or the "director;" the Fatimite Khaliphs of Egypt asserted that the soul of the last of the Imáms animated them in succession, and made this pretext the foundation of their authority. Some of the Oriental Christians have adopted this curious superstition; they say,

that the last Imám became converted to the faith of the Gospel, and that he and the prophet Elijah are the two witnesses spoken of in the Book of Revelations. Indeed, the identity of error and superstition in countries the most distant, and ages the most remote, is one of the most extraordinary facts that history reveals.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOUR ORTHODOX SECTS.

The imperfections of the Korán as a civil and religious code were early felt; the number of unprovided rules, even if Mohammedanism had been confined to the peninsula of Arabia, would have been considerable, but when the religion was established in new countries, and over a wide space, not only were the laws found deficient in number, but many which had been formed for the peculiar circumstances, were found incapable of execution in countries whose situation was wholly different. The number of heresies that appeared, the sanguinary wars they occasioned, and perhaps a dread that the frame-work of society would not subsist unless supported by positive institutions, induced the Khaliphs of Bagdad to search for those traditionary sayings of Mohammed, which might be wrested into directions respecting the omitted cases of the Korán. From both the written and unwritten word was formed a code, certainly far from being perfect, but still possessing the great virtue of elasticity, the power of accommodating itself to the changes of time and circumstances. Two new

classes were gradually formed in the state, those of priests and lawyers, a circumstance, which Mohammed seems not to have anticipated, for in his army, like Cromwell's regiment, the same person filled the office of military guide and religious instructor. More than a century elapsed before the formation of what may be called a law-school in Bagdad; but when once the institution was founded, its necessity became obvious; the reception of traditions rendering doctors of the laws as necessary to the Mohammedans as they had been to the Jews.

Abú-Hanifa was the first of the Islamite casuists; he learned the dogmas of the Mohammedan faith, and the principal traditions from persons who had been cotemporary with Mohammed, and though he is now regarded as the chief authority among the Sonnites, he was through life a devoted partisan of the family of Ali. His stern rectitude displeased the Khaliph, and when he refused to accept the office of judge, he was thrown into prison. During his confinement, he is said to have read the Korán through seven thousand times. D'Ohsson assures us that he was poisoned by command of the Khaliph, for having in the council of the Ulemas, or doctors of the law, resisted the severe punishment which the monarch wished to inflict on the rebellious citizens of Mosul, in the 150th year of the Hegira (A. D. 767.) The Hanifites are usually called "the followers of reason," because they are principally guided by their own judgment in giving a decision, the other sects adhere more closely to the letter of tradition. This sect was first established in Irák; it is now the established

faith of the Turks and Tartars, but it has branched into numerous subdivisions.

From the love of marvellous coincidence, natural to half-civilized nations, the Arabian writers have asserted that Al Shafai, the founder of the second orthodox sect, was born on the very day that Abú-Hanifa died. His fame as a scholar, was principally established in Egypt. The celebrated Saladin so highly valued the tenets of this doctor, that he founded a college in Cairo, where nothing else was permitted to be taught; at present this sect is almost wholly confined to Arabia.

The third of the orthodox sects in importance, but the second in the order of time, owes its origin to Málec-ebn-Ans, a native of Medina, who flourished in the reign of the celebrated Khaliph, Harún-al-Raschid. He was remarkable for strenuously insisting on the literal acceptation of the prohibitory precepts; being asked whether it was lawful to eat of the porpoise or sea-hog, he replied in the negative, observing in support of his decision, that though it was really a fish, yet as it bore the name of a prohibited animal it must be considered as included in the prophet's edict against swine's-fish. On his death-bed, he bitterly lamentad that in too many of his decisions he had followed his own opinions rather than the literal sense of the Korán, and the sacred traditions. The doctrines of Malec prevail chiefly in Barbary and some other parts of Africa.

Ahmed-ebn-Hambal, the founder of the fourth orthodox sect, was a cotemporary and friend of Al Shafei; he is said to have been so well versed

in the traditions of Mohammed, that he could repeat no less than a million of them by rote. In his age arose the celebrated controversy respecting the eternity of the Korán, a dogma which Ahmed strenuously supported; his vehemence provoked the vengeance of the Khaliph Al Mótasem, who maintained that the Korán was created, and by his command, the teacher was imprisoned and severely scourged. The sect of the Hanbalites prevails principally in the wilder districts of Arabia; its austere tenets being well suited to the simple manners of the Bedouins. From it the sect of the Wahabees appears to have been derived. In the reign of the Khaliph Al Rádi, the Hanbalites, indignant at the progress which luxury had made, excited great commotions at Bagdad, breaking into houses, spilling any wine they discovered, destroying musical instruments, and burning rich garments; and these disturbances were not quelled without considerable difficulty.

These four doctors are highly venerated by the Sunnites. Their systems are fundamentally the same, both in dogmatic and speculative theology; they differ chiefly on ceremonial points, and questions of civil or political administration. They all join in hostility to the house of Ali, and the Schiites who support his cause; so far is this hatred carried, that the Mufti and chief doctors of the law have more than once unanimously declared "to slay a Persian Shiah is more acceptable to God, than to slay seventy Christians or idolaters." Having already quoted several Schiite documents, we shall here insert a curious Sunnite state-paper, the letter addressed

by Sultan Selim I. (A. D. 1514), to the Persian monarch Shah Ismail.

Selim to Ismail.

"The Supreme Being, who is the sovereign disposer of human destiny, the source of all knowledge, and all intelligence and wisdom, says in his holy scripture, that true divine worship is to be found in the Mussulman religion alone, and that he who joins himself to any other creed, far from being heard and saved, shall on the contrary, be in the number of those condemned at the final judgment. The God of truth adds, that his counsels and decrees are immutable; that all the actions of men should have reference to him, and that he who turns from the true path, shall be condemned to the flames of hell and eternal torments. Place us, O Lord, in the number of the true believers, who walk in the ways of salvation, and diligently keep from the road of infidelity and perdition; may thy holiest benedictions rest upon Mohammed, the prince of both worlds, the chief of the prophets, and may it extend to all his posterity and all his disciples.

"The monarch of the Ottomans; the master of all the heroes and valiant men of the age, who equals Feridûn* in force and power, Alexander

* Feridûn is said to have been placed upon the throne by the heroic exertions of the blacksmith, Gavah, whose insurrection against Zahák, is as we have already mentioned, one of the circumstances most celebrated in Persian history, or rather in the Persian legends. Mirkhoud gives the following character of Feridûn: "The unanimous accord of the most distinguished "writers represents him as an intrepid monarch, and magnificent "sovereign: a world in the form of universal sway; a universe "in the robes of royal authority; who to the strictest discipline

the Great in majesty and glory, and Kai Khosrau* in equity and clemency, the exterminator of infidels and idolators, the destroyer of the enemies of the orthodox faith, the terror of the tyrants and Pharaohs of this age, who humbles unjust and haughty princes, who breaks to pieces the sceptres and crowns of the greatest

"and government joined the perfection of reason and discernment. In this reign institutes of bravery and humanity were "widely diffused; the foundations of munificence and bounty "acquired new strength;

"Feridún the happy was not an angel,
"Neither was he formed of musk and ambergris:
"He acquired his glory by justice and liberality.—
"Be thou just and liberal, and thou wilt also be a Feridún."

SHEA's *Mirkhoud*, 135.

* This prince, the Cyrus of the Greek historians, and the Kóresh of the Holy Scriptures is one of the most celebrated heroes of the East. His traditionary history is full of fables, but still it confirms in all the leading particulars the narrative of Herodotus and the circumstances recorded by the prophet Daniel. (*See Dublin University Review*, No. IV.) Mirkhoud gives him the following character: "This prince was the precious pearl of the necklace of fortunate sovereigns, the most "excellent production of the seven heavens and the four elements: such was his might that he could cope with the "empyreal heaven and the revolving skies; the irresistible force "of his mandates appeared as a type of destiny and an example "of fate. No sooner had the sound of the imperial kettle-drum "reached the hearing of the human race, than the kings of remote regions and the rulers of every realm, assembled under "the shadow of the standard distinguished by victory; and "Kai Khosrau, both by hereditary right and superior talent, "assumed the reins of empire, and regulated the arrangement "of public affairs. He rescued from violence and oppression, "the cultivators who had been buffeted and trampled under "foot by tyranny: he always regarded as an imperative duty "the conferring of grace and honour, benefits and notice, on all "men, in proportion to their state, and suitably to their rank."— SHEA's *Mirkhoud*, 244.

potentates of the earth; the glorious Sultan Selim Khan, son of the Sultan Bayezid (Bajazet) Khan, son of the Sultan Múrad Khan. addresses graciously these words to thee Emir Ismail, who art the ruler of Persia, the commander of that kingdom's forces, the Zahak* of the East, the Afrasiáb† of thine age, the Daráb‡ of modern

* Zahak is said, by the Persian writers, to have been an Arabian tyrant, sent by Providence as a scourge to punish the arrogance of Jemsheed, (probably the Achæmenes of the Greeks.) The Persians exhaust all the epithets of their copious language in describing his atrocious tyranny. At length he was punished by two large serpents springing from his shoulders, who fed upon his flesh; Eblis, or Satan, is said to have inflicted the disease by a treacherous kiss, and afterwards suggested as a remedy a plaster of young men's brains. Mirkhoud gravely asserts, that the Kurds are descended from some of the young men destined to be sacrificed for supplying these plasters, who escaped to the mountains. Zahak, after his defeat by Feridún, was put to death by torture.

† The crimes and misfortunes of Afrasiáb (probably the Astyages of the Greeks,) are celebrated throughout the East, and form the subject of a well-known proverb,

"The owl hath built her nest in the palace of the Cæsars,
And the spider spread her web in the halls of Afrasiáb."

He is said to have murdered Siyáwesh (Cambyses), the husband of his daughter, and to have prepared the same fate for her infant son, afterwards the celebrated Kai Khosrau, but Pirán Wisah (Harpagus) rescued the child, and educated him in secret until he had attained sufficient age to assert his claim to the Persian crown. One of Kai Khosrau's earliest expeditions was against the murderer of his father; Afrasiáb was completely defeated; some say that he fell in battle, others that he was brought into the presence of Kai Khosrau, and slain with the very dagger which had been used in the murder of Siyáwesh. It is scarcely necessary to remark the similarity between the Persian account of this incident, and that given by Herodotus.

‡ According to the Persians, Felikoos, King of Room (Philip of Macedon), was compelled to pay a thousand golden eggs as tribute to the Persian monarch, and to give him his daughter in marriage. The Persian despot taking some dis-

times, to inform thee that the works framed by the hands of the Most Highest are not the frail productians of caprice and folly, but that they contain an infinity of mysteries which the human mind cannot penetrate. God himself says, in his holy book, "We have not created the "heavens and the earth to make a sport of them." Man, who is the most noble and most excellent of creatures, the abridgment of God's wonders, is consequently the image and representative of his adorable Creator; as we see in this sacred passage, "He hath appointed you his depûties "upon the earth," and that, because uniting the faculties of a spiritual nature to a material body, man is the only created being that can know the attributes of the Deity, and worship his adorable perfections. But the excellence of this quality of man, and the acquisition of true knowledge, can only be found in the Mussulman doctrine, and in submission to the holy law of the prince of the prophets, the true vicar and vicegerent of the God of mercy. It is only in the purity of this holy religion, that man can prosper in this world, and acquire eternal glory in the next. But Emir Ismail, a like felicity shall never

like to the princess, sent her back to Felikoos when pregnant; her son was Iskander (Alexander the Great), whom Felikoos educated as his heir. On the accession of Daráb the Less (Darius Codomannus), ambassadors were sent to demand the payment of the customary tribute, which had been discontinued for several years. Iskander replied, that "the bird which had laid those eggs was flown." Both monarchs prepared for war, and the Persian monarchy was overthrown at Arbela. It must be said, in extenuation of this legend, that Thrace and Macedon were tributary to the first Persian monarchs of the Hystaspid dynasty. The fable of Iskander's origin is manifestly an invention to soothe national vanity.

be your lot; because you have turned your face from the sanctity of the divine laws; because you have departed from the path of salvation and of the holy commandments; because you have altered the purity of the Mussulman doctrines, dishonoured and destroyed the true worship of God, and usurped the empire of the East by unjust and tyrannical means; because, sprung from the dust, you have raised yourself, by odious methods, to the throne of grandeur and magnificence; because you have opened to Mussulmans the gates of tyranny and oppression; because, to the practices of an impious sect, you have joined iniquity, infidelity, and blasphemy; because, covered with the mantle of falsehood and hypocrisy, you have planted trouble and sedition in every quarter; because you have raised the standard of heterodoxy and irreligion; because that delivering yourself up to caprice and passion, you have had the impiety to relax the sacred bonds of Mussulman law, and permit the practice of libertinism, the massacre of many virtuous and respectable persons, the destruction of mosques and sanctuaries, the demolition of the tombs of the saints, contempt for interpreters and doctors of the law, and for emirs sprung from the blood of the prophet; because you have dishonoured the holy Korán, and sanctioned the anathemas pronounced against the legitimate and venerable Khaliphs (Abú-Bekr, Omar, and Othman.)

"As it is the duty of every zealous and pious prince in particular, and of all the Mussulman people in general, to observe these holy words, "O true believers, execute the will of the most

high," our Ulemas and doctors of the law have all, with one accord, pronounced sentence of death against such an impious and blaspheming wretch as you, imposing on every true Mussulman the obligation to arm himself with zeal and ardour for the defence of religion, for the destruction of heresy and impiety in your person, and in that of your partisans and supporters.

"Animated by the spirit of this solemn decree, in conformity with that sacred book, which is the genuine code of divine precepts, and inflamed with a holy anxiety, such as an earnest zeal to fulfil my royal duties should inspire, of strengthening Islamism on the one hand, and on the other, of delivering from your yoke the people and the nations who groan under the weight of your tyranny and impiety; we have resolved to lay aside our imperial ornaments, to assume the cuirass and coat of mail, to display our invincible banners, to summon to the field our gallant warriors, to draw our glorious weapons from the scabbard of our anger and indignation, and to send forward our troops, whose sabre spares none, the wounds of whose lances are always mortal, and whose arrows would reach an enemy even in the constellation of Sagittarius. In consequence of this noble and firm resolution, we have already taken the field, and marching under the protection of the most high, we hope soon to strike down the arm of wickedness and tyranny; to drive from your head those delusive dreams of greatness and glory which mislead you; to deliver the feeble and the oppressed from the cruel yoke of your domination; finally, to stifle you in the noisome smoke and devouring flames of

those conflagrations which your perverse and seditious projects have kindled; thus verifying upon you the proverb, "He who sows thorns "shall reap calamities and misfortunes." In the mean time, according to the law of our holy prophet, we desire, before coming to blows, to send you instead of the sabre our sacred Korán, and exhort you to embrace the orthodox faith; and it is for this reason that we send you our present imperial letter.

"Every man has a different natural disposition, and the human race is like mines of gold and silver. There are men, whose perserve character forms in them a second nature, and renders them incorrigible; they resemble Negroes, who would vainly strive to make themselves white. There are others who correct their errors, who return from their evil ways; but with them evil is not inveterate, because, attentive to themselves, they mortify their passions, and repress the vicious inclinations of nature. The most efficacious means to cure such evils, is for a person to open his eyes to his own iniquities, to ask pardon of them from the God of mercy, with sentiments of true repentance and profound contrition. Wherefore we exhort you to renounce your errors, and to march with a firm step towards the paths of salvation. We demand of you, at the same time, to resign the possession of those provinces which were heretofore annexed to the Ottoman empire, to renounce all your unjust pretensions over them, and to restore them to our dominion, by the hand of our deputies and officers; this is a course of conduct which will contribute both to

your preservation and your happiness. But if, unfortunately for yourself, you should persist in your present delusion, and, intoxicated with notions of your greatness, your power, and your idle bravery, you should obstinately persevere in your blind, iniquitous, and perverse conduct, soon shall you see the vast plains, now subject to your tyrannical and usurping hand, covered with our tents and brilliant standards, hidden beneath the columns of our victorious troops. There shall they exercise their valour and intrepidity, and there shall they accomplish the decrees predetermined in the counsels of the Most High, who is the God of armies, and the sovereign Judge of human actions.

"In conclusion, safety be to him who pursues the path of safety."

The war that followed this remarkable epistle, gave the Turks possession of Syria, Egypt, part of Irák, and northern Arabia, including the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina. In the next century, Sháh Abbas appeared as the avenger of the Schiites, and exacted ample retribution. He was particularly severe against the Sunnite doctors of the law, whom he regarded, not without reason, as the principal instigators of thos religious wars. Even at the present moment, when both Persia and Turkey are threatened with ruin by the colossal power of Russia, religious dissensions will probably prevent them from combining for their common safety. A friend has permitted us to see a letter from Tabriz, in which it is said that Abbas Mirza,* the pre-

* Since this was written, we regret to say, that intelligence

sumptive her of Persia, is superior to sectarian prejudices, but so was Nadir Sháh, and yet he failed to conciliate the Sunnites and Schiites.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONASTIC ORDERS OF ISLAMISM.

THERE is scarcely any fact more striking in the history of the human race, than the similarity between the errors and superstitions of countries, distant thousands of miles from each other, and of generations, between which many centuries have intervened. Even national legends and traditionary jest, present curious and unexpected points of resemblance; Whittington and his Cat is a tale naturalized in every country between the Pacific and Atlantic, and the same may be said of Cinderella and the Glass Slipper. Many persons rest satisfied with saying, that "human nature will always exhibit the same developements under the same circumstances," but this principle will only account for general resemblances, not for the absolute identity of particulars, because human nature is never twice exhibited under absolutely the same circumstances. If, however, we can find a superstitious practice re-appearing at different times in the world, whose local progress has been always in the same direction, and if we find the same road nearly at the same times travelled by opinions from

has been received of Mirza's death. Persia has reason to lament the premature decease of a prince so eminently accomplished.

which that practice would necessarily result, it seems probable, that by tracing back this road, we may find some country with strong claims to be regarded as the parent both of the opinion and the practice.

Monastic institutions have been grafted on the different religions of Europe and Western Asia, without having any connexion with the fundamental principles of any of them. Perhaps, an exception might have been found in the ecclesiastical corporations of ancient Egypt; but, as these ceased to have existence before the age when Egypt's authentic history begins, nothing can be said with certainty on the subject. The first promulgation of ascetic principles with which we have any acquaintance, is amongst the Persian Magi, where we find them connected with secret associations for political purposses. From the East they were brought to Europe by Pythagoras, and extensively circulated through Greece and Southern Italy. Combined with these practices we find mystic speculations, respecting the nature of Deity, the origin of evil, &c., precisely similar to those that occur in the sacred and philosophical books of the Hindús. The associations both of the Magi and the Pythagoreans were found inconsistent with the security of civil government, and both were suppressed by the strong arm of power.

Not a trace of monastic institutions can be found in the Jewish history, before the return from the Babylonish captivity; soon after that event we find a species of monks called Essenes, forming communities in Palestine, but flourish-

ing most in the Egyptian Alexandria, which seems to have been the great depôt for Indian opinions as well as Indian merchandise. Philo, the great expounder of the doctrines held by those who were termed the philosophical Jews, advocates in the same breath, the practices of the Essenes and the mystic theology of the East. The great calamities which subsequently fell on the Jewish nation, broke up these associations, but traces of asceticism are still to be found among the modern Jews.

What is usually termed Gnosticism, was the first corruption of Christianity; it began before the generation which had witnessed Christ's miracles had disappeared from the earth; the speculations of the Gnostics have been traced by ecclesiastical historians to Persia and Egypt, and it would require very little research, to show that both these countries obtained them from India.

The monastic orders of the Mohammedans are numerous; it is said that some of them were founded in the very beginning of Islamism, but certainly they did not become remarkable until after the faith of the Korán had been corrupted by the new doctrines introduced after the conquest of Persia. From that age, there appeared communities of persons calling themselves Fakirs, from an Arabic word signifying "poor men," and Dervishes, from a Persian term, signifying the "threshold of the door," and hence metaphorically, "humility." In Persia, they also obtained the name of Sofis, from Sóf, which signifies a coarse woollen dress, worn by devotees.

The orders of these dervishes are numerous; D'Ohsson enumerates the thirty-two principal orders in the following chronological table:—

MONASTIC ORDERS OF THE MOHAMMEDANS.

Name.	*Founder.*	*Place of Founder's Death.*	*Year of Hegira.*	*Year of our Lord*
Olwání	Sheikh Olwân	Jeddah	149	766
Edhemí	Ibrahim ebn-Ed-hem	Damascus	161	777
Bestámí	Báyazid Bestámí	Jebel Bestám	261	874
Sacatí	Sirrí Sacatí	Bagdad	295	907
Cádir	Abdu'l-cádir Gilání	Ditto	561	1165
Rufali	Seyd Ahmed Rufali	Ditto	578	1182
Suhherwerdí	Shihabu'ddin Suhherwerdi	Ditto	602	1205
Kubroví	Nejmu'd-din Kubrá	Khwaresm	617	1220
Sházilí	Abu'l Hasan Shazili	Mecca	656	1258
Mevloví	Jelalo'd din Mevlana	Conyah	672	1273
Bedeví	Abu'l-fetan Ahmed Bedeví	Egypt	675	1276
Nacshbendi	PirMohammed Nacshbendi	Persia	719	1319
Sádí	Sadu'd-din Jehawí	Damascus	736	1335
Bek-táshi	Haji Bektash Khorasaní	Kir-Sheher	759	1357
Khalveti	Omar Khalvetí	Caisariyeh	800	1397
Zeini	Zeinud'din Khafi	Kufah or Cufa	838	1434
Babaí	Abdu'l-ghani Pír Bahaí	Adrianople	870	1465
Beirámi	Haji Beiram Ancareví	Angora	876	1471
Eshrefe	Eshref Rumí	Chin Iznic	899	1493
Bekrí	Abú Beker Vefai	Aleppo	902	1497
Sunbulí	Sunbul Yusúf Boleví	Constantinople	936	1529
Gulshení or Rushení	Ibrahim Gulshení	Cairo	940	1533
Yigit Bashí	Shemsu'd-din Yígit Bashí	Magnesia	951	1544
Umm Sinání	Sheikh Umm Sinán	Constantinople	959	1552
Jelvetí	Pir Uftádeh Jelvetí	Búrsah	988	1580
Osháki	Husammu'd-din Oshakí	Constantinople	1001	1592
Shemsí	Shemsu'd-din Sivasí	Medina	1010	1601
Sinán Ummí	Alím Sinán Ummí	Elmálí	1079	1668
Niyázi	Mohammed Niyázi Misri	Lemnos	1100	1694
Musádí	Murád Shámí	Constantinople	1132	1719
Nuru'd-dini	Nuru'd-din Jeráhhí	Ditto	1146	1735
Jemálí	Jemalu'd-din Edirnevi	Ditto	1164	1750

Of these orders the most numerous, and perhaps the most influential, is that of the Nacshbendies, who resemble more the confraternities in Roman Catholic countries, and the Methodists of England, than regulsr Monks. Without quitting the world, they bind themselves to the strict observance of certain forms of devotion. Every day they repeat the Istaghfar (Lord have mercy upon us!) at least once; the Salavát (Lord give

thy peace and blessing to Mohammed and his family, as thou gavest them to Abraham, &c.) seven times; the first chapter of the Korán, seven times; and the 94th and 112th chapters of the same book, nine times. They meet, like the Mothodists, once a week, and in the presence of their class-leaders go through the additional forms of devotion. The reigning Emperor of Morocco is said to be a member of this confraternity; he is the author of the following hymn, which is daily recited from the minarets throughout his dominions, after the first proclamation for morning prayer.

Glory be to God alone!
The shades of night are fled away,
The ruddy dawn leads in the day,
And light once more to mortal eyes is shown.
Bow before the Eternal King,
To his praise loud anthems sing,
For all the benefits bestow'd,
By him, the one, the only God.

But the organization of the other orders is much more rigid. Most of them impose a noviciate, the length of which is usually determined by the opinion that the community forms of the candidate's progress. He is taught to repeat the list of the Divine attributes, seven only being communicated at a time, aud he is bound to tell all his dreams to his superior, who pretends from them to determine the candidate's progress in divine knowledge.

The Mevlevies are, for many reasons, the most remarkable of the rigid orders. A thousand and one days is the mystic number prescribed for the noviciate, and the place where the candidate re-

ceives elementary instruction in spiritual knowledge is no other than the kitchen of the convent. During his noviciate, he is called "the scullion," and it is by "the head-cook," that he is presented to the abbot or superior as worthy of full admission. The cook assists at the ceremony of initiation, and holds the head of the novice, while the superior pronounces over him some verses of the founder, to the following effect:—

He who the chains of evil lust has broke,
And cast aside his passion's fatal yoke,
Enjoys a noble power and glorious reign,
Which from the Prophet he alone could gain.

The prayer called Tekbú is then chanted; after which the chief or abbot places upon the head of the novice the cylindrical cap, peculiar to the Mevlevies; the candidate then sits down beside the cook, while the superior briefly pronounces a form of admission, enumerates the duties of his profession, and recommends the new member to the prayers and good wishes of his brethren.

The mystic philosophy and theology called Sufyism, and which is, in fact, but a modification of pantheism, is very popular with the Mevlevies. The best summary of this extravagant doctrine is contained in the writings of Sir W. Jones. He says: "The Hindú and Persian mystics "concur in believing, that the souls of men "differ infinitely in *degree* but not all in *kind*, "from the divine soul of which they are par- "ticles, and in which they will finally be absorb- "ed; that the Spirit of God pervades the uni- "verse, always immediately present to his work, "and consequently, always in substance; * * * *

" that the beauties of nature are faint resem-
" blances, like images in a mirror, of the Divine
" charms; * * * * that nothing has a pure abso-
" lute existence but mind or spirit; that material
" substances, as the ignorant call them, are no
" more than gay pictures presented continually
" to our minds by the Sempiternal Artist. * * * *
" From these principles flow a thousand meta-
" phors and other poetical figures in the sacred
" poems of the Persians and Hindús, who seem
" to mean the same thing in substance, and differ
" only in expression as their languages differ in
" idiom. The modern Sufis, who profess a belief
" in the Korán, suppose, with great sublimity
" both of thought and diction, an *express con-*
" *tract*, on *the day of eternity without beginning*,
" between the assemblage of created spirits,
" and the Supreme Soul from which they were
" detached, when a celestial voice pronounced
" these words, addressed to each spirit separate-
" ly, '*Art thou not with the Lord?*' that is, art
" thou not bound by a solemn compact with him?
" and all the spirits answered with one voice,
" '*Yes.*'"

The introduction of these Eastern opinions, which were perfectly strange in the religion of Islám, led to the adoption not only of new, but even forbidden practices. Music and dancings were strictly prohibited by the traditions of the Prophet; but several orders of the Dervishes, and more especially the Mevlevies, insisted that the exercise of these in a mystic sense, was an acceptable form of devotion. The founder of the Mevlevies has described the spiritual appli-

cation of the *néi* or flute, in some beautiful verses admirably translated by Sir William Jones.

HEAR, how yon reed in sadly-pleasing tales,
Departed bliss and present woe bewails!
'With me from native banks untimely torn
'Love-warbling youths, and soft-eyed virgins mourn.
'Oh! let the heart by fatal absence rent,
'Feel what I sing, and bleed when I lament:
'Who roams in exile from his parent bow'r,
'Pants to return, and chides each lingering hour.
'My notes in circles of the grave and gay,
'Have ruled the rising, cheer'd the closing day;
'Each in my fond affections claim'd a part,
'But none discern'd the secret of my heart.
'What though my strains and sorrows flow combined!
'Yet ears are slow and carnal eyes are blind.
'Free through each mortal from the spirits roll,
'But sight avails not —Can we see the soul?'
Such notes breathed gently from yon vocal frame,—
Breathed, said I? —No—'twas all enlivening flame.
'Tis love* that fills the reed with warmth divine,
'Tis love that sparkles in the racy wine,
Me, plaintive wanderer from my peerless maid,
The reed has fired and all my soul betray'd.
He gives the bane and he with balsam cures:
Afflicts, yet soothes, impassions, yet allures.
Delightful pangs his amorous tales prolong,
And Leila's frantic lover† lives in song.
Not he who reasons best, this wisdom knows;
Ears only drink what rapturous tongues disclose.
Nor fruitless deem the reed's heart-piercing pain;
See sweetness dropping from the parted cane.
Alternate hope and fear my days divide,
I courted Grief, and Anguish was my bride.
Flow on, sad stream of life! I smile secure,
THOU livest, THOU, the purest of the pure!
Rise, vigorous youth! Be free; be nobly bold:
Shall chains confine you, though they blaze with gold?

* Love divine, of which the Sufis regard earthly love as the imperfect type.

† Mejnún went mad for love of Leila; the Sufi poets represent this as a type of man deprived of intercourse with heaven.

Go; to your vase the gather'd main convey:
What were your stores? The pittance of a day!
New plans for wealth your fancies would invent;
Yet shells, to nourish pearls, must lie content.
The man, whose robe love's purple arrows rend
Bids avarice rest and toils tumultuous end.
Hail, heavenly love! true source of endless gains!
Thy balm restores me, and thy skill sustains.
Oh! more than Galen learned, than Plato wise!
My guide, my law, my joy supreme, arise!
Love warms this frigid clay with mystic fire;
And dancing mountains leap with young desire.
Blest is the soul, that swims in seas of love,
And long the life sustain'd by food above.
With forms imperfect can perfection dwell?
Here pause my song, and thou, vain world, farewell.

This singular, and we may add, hazardous mixture of luxuriant imagery with ascetic sentiments, is the common characteristic of the Turkish and Persian poetry, for most poets of both countries belong to some order of Dervishes, and are more or less tainted with Sufyism. The style is not without a parallel even in Europe: the life of St. Catherine may be quoted as an example, but the subject is too painful to our feelings to be examined at greater length.

The mystic dances of the Mevlevies differ from those of the other orders, and are very singular exhibitions. Nine, eleven, or thirteen of the fraternity squat down on sheep-skins in a circle; the floor of the dancing-room is circular, its design being manifestly borrowed from a tent. They remain for nearly an hour perfectly silent, with their eyes closed, as if absorbed in meditation. The president then invites his brethren to join in reciting the first chapter of the Korán, "to the honour of God, his prophets, especially Mohammed, the saints, Mohammed's

wives, disciples, and descendants, the martyrs, the Khaliphs, the founder of the order, &c." Prayers are then recited in chorus,and afterwards the dance begins. All quitting their places at the same time, range themselves on the left of their superior, and slowly advance towards him, with folded arms and downcast eyes. When the first of the Dervishes comes nearly opposite the president, he salutes, with a low bow, the tablet in the wall over his head, on which is engraved the name of the founder of the order; he then with two springs gets to the right side of the president, and having humbly saluted him, begins his dance. This consists in turning on the heel of the left foot, with closed eyes and extended arms, advancing slowly, and making as it were insensibly the round of the apartment. He is followed by the second and third Dervishes; after which all begin spinning on the foot, and moving round, taking care to keep at such a distance that they may not interfere with each other's motions. This fatiguing process continues two hours, interrupted only by two brief pauses, during which the Superior chants some short prayer. When the performance draws toward a close; the superior joins in the dance, and the whole concludes with a prayer for the royal family, the clergy, the members of the order, and the faithful throughout the world.

The exhibition of the Rufalies is still more extraordinary; it is divided into five acts; in the last of which, they lick red-hot swords, cut and wound themselves with knives, and lacerate their bodies until they sink exhausted. The Superior, then going round, breathes upon the wounds, after which they are carefully dressed.

Most of the orders have convents, the married members are not permitted to bring their wives into the monastery, where they must sleep twice a week, but especially on the nights preceding their holy dances. Only one order, that of the Bektashies can properly be called mendicant; many of these profess to live on alms alone, after the example of their founder. They are not very importunate beggars rarely addressing themselves to particular individuals, they for the most part are found in crowded streets, shouting out "Relief for the love of God." Others of this order become hermits, and profess to support themselves by manual labour.

The richer convents are always ready to give assistance to their poorer brethren, nor do they confine their relief to those of the same order; in this respect the monastic institutions of the Mohammedans are honourably distinguished from those in Roman Catholic countries, where the disputes between rival orders have frequently disturbed the public tranquillity. No order is better endowed than that of the Mevlevies, but its members do not live the less abstemiously on that account; they use only the coarsest fare and the plainest raiment, and their superabundant renvenues are fairly distributed to the poor. It is notorious, that in Spain the rich convents are guarded with the utmost care, and that it is scarcely possible to penetrate the secrets of the cloister, still circumstances occasionally transpire which prove that vows of abstinence are subjected to a very liberal interpretation. No instances have occurred of the Dervishes meddling in politics: it is scarcely necessary to add, that monks and friars are, at this present

moment, the leaders of apostolical party in Spain and Portugal. Though not bound by oaths or vows, it is rare to find a Dervish quit his order and return again into the world. All are at liberty to do so, but the habits of association are found to be as strong as the most solemn promises. Each regards it as a duty to die in the order which he has once joined. To the spirit of poverty and perseverance for which they are conspicuous, they add a remarkable humility and implicit submission to their superiors, and this not only within the walls of their convents, but in the streets and in society. Were the Dervishes of Turkey to lay aside their distinctive dress, they would still be recognised by their modest gait and submissive countenance.

The Dervishes are in general ready to admit strangers, and even Christians, to witness their religious dances. Some will even permit the uninitiated to join in these exercises; in the halls where the performances take place, two galleries are usually erected, one open, for men, the other fenced with gratings, for women. Most of the travellers who have visited these exhibitions have borne honourable testimony to the kindness with which they were received, and the attention with which they were treated. It is no wonder that the monastic orders are very popular in Mohammedan countries; whenever a Dervish appears he is warmly welcomed. Many of the wealthy keep a Dervish in their house, believing that his presence will bring upon them the blessing of heaven. As most of them pretend to a knowledge of charms, and the art of averting the influence of "the evil eye," most commanders of

armies take with them a Dervish as their Pír, or religious adviser. Even the strong mind of Timúr was not free from this superstition, though it is rather singular that the person he chose as his Father-confessor, held also the situation of head-groom As a specimen of the intelligence sometimes displayed by these Pirs, we shall extract two interpretations of dreams recorded by Timúr in his *Auto-biography*.

" Another time when I had reflected on the " past, I repented and was ashamed of many of " my doings and sayings, and soon after dreamt " that I was sitting in a desert, overgrown with " thorns and thistles, and that I was surrounded " by dogs, hogs, demons, men, and women with " frightful and horrid countenances. I was so " terrified by their appearance, that I awoke, " and was so much impressed with the dream, " that I wrote the circumstance to my *Pír*, and " received from him the following answer.— " 'That which you saw in a dream was the re- " presentation of your vices and evil actions, " such as tyranny, passion, lust, injuring the " creatures of God, avarice, covetouness, envy, " and pride, which are all of the worst quality; " therefore change your habits, and you will re- " ceive the reward of good actions, and virtuous " morals.' In consequence of this advice, from " that time I refrained from injuring mankind, " and from all enemity and strife."

" Another time I dreamt, that I entered a " garden filled with flowers and odoriferous " herbs; in it were also many fruit-trees, and " running streams; it was inhabited by beautiful young persons, and charming songsters, also

" by handsome boys and girls, all of whom came
" and paid their respects to me. I was so much
" delighted with them, and pleased with my
" dream, that I again wrote all the particulars
" to my *Pir*, who wrote me in answer.—'Return
" thanks to God, for the Almighty has shown
you the representation of your good actions
" and virtuous deeds, and know that the prophet
" (on whom be peace) hath said, *Every man at*
" *his birth has two devils in attendance; I also*
" *had them, but by the grace of God, I have sub-*
" *dued them;* it is therefore incumbent on every
" man to imitate the conduct of the holy pro-
" phet, and endeavour to subdue his animal and
" brutal passions, and invest himself with good
" qualities, and praise-worthy morals, by which
" he may attain eternal felicity. Farewell.'"

The Kalenders are wandering Dervishes, who belong not to these orders, their name signifies "pure gold," in allusion to the purification of their souls by severe penances. To this degraded class belong the spies, the assassins, and the plunderers, that we read of among the Dervishes; and from them also numerous false prophets have sprung at different times. Their pretensions, however, are encouraged only by the very lowest ranks of society; and they are not acknowleged as brethren by the members of the regular confraternities.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HISTORY OF MOHAMMEDANISM IN INDIA

Though the commercial establishments of the Saracens, in the Indian Ocean, both diffused a knowledge of the Mohammedan religion along the coasts of the Indian peninsula, and led to its partial adoption by some minor tribes, yet the creed of Islám never extended itself through the south of Hindústan, though it became triumphant in the northern provinces. Sultan Mahmúd, the first great monarch of the Ghizni dynasty, subdued the north-west of India, in the beginning of the eleventh century, destroyed the temples and idols, and erected mosques in the principal towns. The passive resistance of the Hindús proved, however, too strong for Mohammedan fanaticism; and when the first fury of the invasion was over, a tacit toleration was conceded to the Brahmins, which virtually amounted to full religious liberty. Nor was this state of things altered by the establishment of the Mongolian dynasty in the fourteenth century by the Emperor Baber; he respected the prejudices of his brahminical subjects, and never interfered with their forms of worship. Where the Hindús had the supremacy, the Mohammedans enjoyed similar freedom; when the Portuguese, after discovering the passage round the Cape, first reached the coast of Malabar, they found the Arabian traders not only tolerated, but possessing considerable political influence at the court of the Zamorin of Calicut. Their advice was asked when first the Christians appeared on

the coast, and their suggestions inspired the suspicions to which the adventurers were exposed.*

The author of the Tohfut-ul-Mujahideen,† having enumerated several commercial towns, either founded or enlarged by the Mohammedans,

* According to Camoens, they bribed the prime minister of the Zamorin, whom he calls the Regent, and also appealed to the monarch's gratitude, reciting all the services they had performed. The account is thus given in the *Lusiad*, book viii.

As check'd by terror or impell'd by hate,
Of various means they ponder and debate,
Against the Lusian train what arts employ,
By force to slaughter, or by fraud destroy;
Now black, now pale, their bearded cheeks appear,
As boiling rage prevails, or boding fear;
Beneath their shady brows their eye-balls roll,
Nor one soft gleam bespeaks the generous soul;
Through quivering lips they draw their panting breath,
While their dark fraud decrees the work of death.
Lured was the regent with the Moorish gold,
And now agreed their fraudful course to hold,
Swift to the king the regent's steps they tread,
The king they found o'erwhelm'd in sacred dread;
The word they take, their ancient deeds relate,
Their ever-faithful service of the state:
"For ages long, from shore to distant shore
For thee our ready keels the traffic bore:
For thee we dar'd each horror of the wave,
Whate'er thy treasures boast our labour gave:
And wilt thou now confer our long-earn'd due,
Thy trade and favour on a stranger crew?"

MICKLE'S *Translation.*

Camoens, though a bitter enemy of the Saracens, does not deny that they had strong claims on the Zamorin's gratitude; and the Portuguese historians confess, that it was owing to the aid of the Mohommedans, that Calicut became the chief city on the coast of Malabar.

† Translated by Lieutenant Rowlandson, published by the Oriental Translation Committee, 1833.

gives the following description of their political condition previous to the arrival of Vasco de Gama: "Now in all these towns the populatian became much increased, and the number of buildings enlarged, by means of the trade carried on by the Mohammedans, towards whom the chieftains of those places abstained from all oppression; and notwithstanding that these rulers and their troops were all Pagans, they paid much regard to their prejudices and customs, and avoided any act of aggression on the Mohammedans, except on some extraordinary provocation; this amicable footing being the more remarkable, from the circumstance of the Mohammedans not forming more than a tenth part of the population. The Mohammedans of Malabar not having any emir amongst them possessed of sufficient power and authority to govern them, are consequently under the rule of the Pagan chieftains, who faithfully guard their interests and decide between them, besides granting to them advantageous privileges; and should any Mohammedan subject himself to the punishment of fine by them, notwithstanding his delinquency or any other provocation, their treatment to the faithful as a body, continues kind and respectful, because to them they owe the increase of towns in their country, these having sprung up from the residence of the faithful amongst them .... If a Mohammedan shall have committed a crime worthy of death, and which by the laws of the inhabitants of the country is considered capital, having first obtained the assent of the principal Mohammedans, the Pagans put him to death, and after his execution deliver his body over to

his brethren; who, having washed it and placed it in a coffin, offer up over it the prayer for the dead, and afterwards give it burial amongst the dead of their sect . . . On the occasion of a Mohammedan being guilty of any crime, or of injuring the person of another feloniously, the chief of the Pagans calls upon his brethren to drive him out from amongst them, and to degrade him and bring him to punishment. Lastly, the Nairs do not molest their countrymen who have abjured idolatry and come over to the Mohammedan religion, nor endeavour to intimidate them by threats, but treat them with the same consideration and respect they evince to the other Mohammedans, although the persons who have thus apostatized be of the lowest grade. In short, in consequence of the friendly treatment that they uniformly experienced from these people, the Mohammedan merchants in ancient times were induced to come amongst, and associate with them."

From the very first association of the Mohammedans with the Hindús, we see, consequently, that mutual tolerance was exercised, and that a religious harmony, highly honourable to both parties, subsisted. Nor were these relations changed by the Mongolian conquest; the descendants of Timúr established their political supremacy over Northern India, but made no attempt to change the religion of the vanquished. It was natural, under such circumstances, that some mixture of the two creeds should occur, and accordingly we find Brahminical practices, and many of the prejudices of *caste* adopted by the conquerors at a very early period, while on the other hand, the Hindús learned to speak with

respect of Mohammed and the prophets of Islám.

Nor was this the only instance of the abatement of fanaticism in the Mohammedans that settled in India; the Sunnites and Schiites laid aside their mutual animosities when they entered the peninsula: the partisans of Ali ceased to curse Omar, and the adherents of the four first Khaliphs forbore to ridicule the twelve Imáms. These circumstances seem to have induced the emperor Akbar, who ascended the throne A. D. 1556, to aim at the formation of a new religion, which might unite into one body Mohammedans, Hindús, the followers of Zoroaster, and even Jews and Christians. Of the pure faith of Christianity, however, Akbar had no knowledge; Geronimo Xavier, a relation to the celebrated missionary, St. Francis Xavier, who was sent in the year 1602 to the Mogul court, presented the emperor with a translation of the Gospels into Persian. In the following letter, which Akbar addressed to the King of Portugal, a copy of which has been preserved by his vizier, the celebrated Abû'l Frazl,* it will be seen that he omits the complimentary mention of Mohammed, with which every true Mussulman commences his epistles. For the subjoined translation of this very important documents, we are indebted to Mr. James Fraser, author of the History of Nadir Shah.

" A letter from the King of kings to the ruler " of the Franks.† Glory inconceivable to God, " the true king, whose dominions are safe from " the disaster of decay, and his realms secure " from the calamity of change. The wonder-

* Author of the *Ayeen Akbary*.

† Fraser supposes that Akbar really imagined the king of

" ful extent of the heavens and earth is but a
" minute part of the world of his creation, and
" infinite space, but a small corner of his pro-
" duction. A governor, who has regulated the
" order of the universe, and the management of
" the sons of Adam, by the understanding of
" kings who exercise justice. A legislator, who
" by the ties of love and bonds of affection, has
" implanted in the various beings and several
" creatures the passion of inclination and union,
" and the affections of mutual tendency and
" society.

" And let praises unbounded be offered to the
" pure souls of the company of prophets* and
" apostles, who walked in the paths of truth,
" and gave directions, both general and par-
" ticular, to lead us to the ways of righteous-
" ness.

" It is well known that, with those who
" have stored themselves with knowledge,† and
" studied Nature, nothing in this lower world,

Portugal to be the most powerful European monarch, on account of the extensive conquests that the Portuguese had made in India. But although Abulfeda, in his *Chronicles*, particularly distinguishes Richard Cœur de Lion as Al Inkitar, or the Englishman; yet the Mohammedans, even now, call all Europeans by the general name Al Afrani, or the Franks. In the Tohfut-ul-Mugahideen, the Portuguese are invariably called Franks; but of late years the Mussulmans of India, have learned to distinguish Al Andaloos, "the Spaniard," and Al Afransawi, "the Frenchman," from Al Inkitar, "the Englishman."

* It will be seen from this passage, that Akbar had totally forsaken Mohammedanism when this letter was written. No true Mussulman would write a letter, however short, without specially mentioning Mohammed, and reciting his praise.

† The expressions here used by the emperor are precisely those condemned by the stricter doctors of Islám, who look with great suspicion on scientific pursuits.

" which is a minor of the spiritual one,* is pre-
" ferable to love, or more sacred than frindship.
" Therefore they ascribe the economy and right
" disposition of the world to affection and har-
" mony. For whatever heart the Sun of Love
" shines on, it clears the whole soul from the
" darkness of mortality; and how much more is
" this requisite in princes, the good correspon-
" dence of whom is the cause of happiness to
" the world and the people therein. For which
" reasons it has been my earnest and entire en-
" deavour to promote and confirm the ties of
" friendship and bonds of union amongst God's
" creatures, especially among the high rank of
" kings, whom God by his favour has particular-
" ly distinguished from the rest of mankind; and
" more especially his Royal Majesty,† who is
" endowed with intellectual knowledge, is the
" reviver of the ordinances of Jesus, and stands
" in no need of praise or description. Our neigh-
" bourhood,‡ with that renowned prince, making
" an alliance and friendship more indispensably
" necessary; and as a personal conference is im-
" practicable, on account of several obstacles and
" many weighty reasons, the want thereof can
" only be supplied by embassies and a mutual
" correspondence. Since it is certain that these
" only can make up the loss of a personal con-
" versation and interviews, we hope that they
" will be mutually carried on without interrup-
" tion, that the affairs and desires of each may
" be manifested to the other.

* This notion is borrowed from the Hindú philosophy.

† Meaning the king of Portugal.

‡ The Portuguese conquests in India extended to the confines of the Mogul empire.

"Your majesty knows that the learned and di-"vines of all nations and times, in their opinions "concerning the world of appearance and the "intellectual,* agree in this, that the former "ought to be of no consideration in respect to "the latter; yet the wise men of the times, and "the great ones of all nations, toil much in per-"fecting themselves, as to this perishable and "showy state, and consume the best of their "lives and the choicest of their time, in pro-"curing apparent delights, being swallowed up "and dissolved in fleeting pleasures and transi-"tory joys. The most High God, merely through "his eternal favour and perpetual grace, not-"withstanding so many obstacles, and such a "world of business and employment has dispos-"ed my heart so as always to seek him; and "though he has subjected the dominions of so "many powerful princes to me, which to the "best of my judgment I endeavour to manage "and govern, so as that all my subjects are con-"tented and happy; yet, praise be to God, his "will and my duty to him is the end I propose "in all my actions and desires. And as most

* These sentiments are derived from the Sufćan philosophy, which is itself borrowed from that of the Indian sages. The Sufees believe that by continued abstraction from the things of time and sense, they can so purify the soul as to render it fit to be absorbed into the Deity, and identified with the Godhead. Mirkhoud ascribes a similar belief to Kai Khosrou, attributing to him the following verses:

As long as thy love has not entirely divested me of egotism,
I cannot sit with thee according to my wishes, freed from self;
I am the thorn of my own way. Release me from myself,
That distinction of persons may be effaced, and thou and I
blended into one.

This doctrine is manifestly the same as the Nurwán of the Buddhists.

" people, being enchained by the bonds of con-
" straint and fashion, and regarding the customs of
" their ancestors, relations, and acquaintances,
" without examining the arguments or reasons
" for it, give an implicit faith to that religion in
" which they have been brought up, and remain
" deprived of the excellency of the truth, the
" finding of which is the proper end of reason;
" therefore at times I converse with the learned
" of all religions,* and profit by the discourse

* Fraser had copies of letters from Abdallah Khán, prince of Tartary, severely reprobating Akbar for his intercourse with the Brahmins, and his indifference to the Mohammedan faith. Jahangueir (the son of Akbar), in his curious autobiography, published by the Oriental Translation Committee, declares that he remonstrated with his father on account of his tolerant, or rather latitudinarian principles. Akbar's noble reply deserves to be preserved: " My dear child," said he, " I find myself a puis-
" sant monarch, the shadow of God upon earth. I have seen
" that he bestows the blessings of his gracious providence upon
" all his creatures, without distinction. Ill should I discharge
" the duties of my exalted station, were I to withhold my com-
" passion and indulgence from any of those intrusted to my
" charge. With all of the human race, with all of God's crea-
" tures, I am at peace. Why then should I permit myself, un-
" der any consideration, to be the cause of molestation or ag-
" gression to any one! Besides, are not five parts in six of
" mankind, either Hindûs or aliens to the faith? and were I to
" be governed by the motives you suggest, what alternative can
" I have but to put them all to death? I have thought it there-
" fore my wisest plan to let these men alone. Neither is it to be
" forgotten, that the class of which we are speaking, in common
" with the other inhabitants of Agra, are usefully employed,
" either in the pursuits of science, or the arts, or of improve-
" ments for the benefit of mankind, and have in numerous in-
" stances arrived at the highest distinctions in the state, there
" being indeed to be found in this city men of every description,
" and of every religion on the face of the earth."—*Memoirs of*
" *Jahangueir*, p. 15.

Jahangueir did not follow his father's example, but became a bitter persecutor.

" of each. As the veil of a language interposes " betwixt us, it would be expedient, you would " oblige me with such a person as could distinct- " ly relate and explain the above affair. It has " also reached my fortunate ears, that the heaven- " ly books, such as the Pentateuch, Psalms, and " Gospels, are put into Arabic and Persic; should " there be a possibility of procuring in your " country, a translation of these, or of any other " books that might be of general benefit, let " them be sent. For a further confirmation of " our friendship, and securing the foundation of " affection and unity, I have sent my trusty " friend, the learned and honourable Seïd Mazuf- " fer, whom I have particularly favoured and dis- " guished; he will communicate several things " to you personally in which confide. Always " keep open the doors of correspondence and embassy; and peace to him who follows the " guide? Written in the month Ribbi-al-aval, 990, (April, 1582.*)"

This valuable document sufficiently refutes those, who attribute the religious innovations of Akbar to folly, caprice, or the paltry vanity of being honoured as the founder of a sect. His language is that of a man possessing a strong clear understanding, deeply impressed with the importance of the subject into which he was inquiring, and sincerely anxious to obtain authentic information. That he did not embrace Christianity is unfortunately true, but the result would probably have been different, had he seen the Gospels in their original purity.

* We have been unable to discover whether this letter ever reached its destination.

Akbar, like many others, tried to make an eclectic religion, a philosophic creed, which, like that proposed by the emperor Julian,* should comprehend every sect and denomination. Such an attempt is more foolish than wicked, for it is rendered innocuous by its utter absurdity. A philosophic creed full of ideal abstractions, may possibly charm the imagination, but it is cold and passionless, it "plays round the head but comes not near the heart," and it leaves unsatisfied all the desires and cravings of our nature. When Paganism was on the decline, its priests did not persecute the philosophers, because they knew that mere speculations would never satisfy the multitude, but they directed all their wrath against Christianity, for its fundamental truth was practical and tangible, "God *manifest in the flesh.*"

That two such religions as the Mohammedan and Brahminical should have existed together for six centuries, without producing civil commotions, is a fact not paralleled in the history of the world. It is not surprising that under such circumstances the exclusive bigotry taught by the Korán gradually faded, until the duty of propagating religion by the sword became one of those phrases which men repeat without attaching meaning to their words. Still less wonderful is it, that the contemplation of such opposite systems led Akbar to doubt the truth of both, and to look for one of purer sentiments and clearer evidence. Like most Mohammedan reformers, the emperor especially insisted on the

* See the recent edition of Libanius.

great doctrine of the Divine Unity, which he declared was but obscurely revealed to the prophets; but unlike every other propagator of a new faith, his proceedings were regulated by the utmost caution, and his appeals made solely to the reason. The opportunity which he embraced to declare his sentiments, is singularly characteristic of his prudence. In the year 1575, a dispute arose as to the number of wives that a Moslem might legally marry. The Korán says, "two, or three, or four," but the conjunction (vau) may also be translated *and*, in which case the prophet would have permitted nine wives to his followers. From this difficulty arose several others connected with the question of marriage, the most indeterminate in the whole range of Mohammedan law; tradition was found to contradict tradition, Imám was quoted against Imám, and commentator against commentator, until the laws on the subject were proved to be a mass of confusion and uncertainty. Upon this the emperor gave the first hint of his scepticism, averring that no divine system could display such manifest contradictions; henceforward he professed himself a searcher after truth, and openly entered into familiar conferences with the teachers of every religion. An eastern writer, in mentioning these conferences, hints at the dangers that result from too daring a spirit of inquiry, and gives a warning to many of our own age and country, who are too ready to discuss doctrines as if they were mere theoretic opinions, and not fraught with the most important consequences. He says, "the emperor frequently passed his time, particularly on Fri-

day nights, in company with learned men, in ascertaining the truth of their respective sects and religions; when they so closely engaged in dispute, that they at last convicted each other of infidelity, and produced such confusion in religion that no one knew what to believe." The purport, and very probably the exact words, of many of these disputations are preserved in that very extraordinary work, the *Dabistan;* a work of the utmost value to all that desire to become acquainted with the religious philosophy of Central and Western Asia.

In one of these conversations, a philosopher, apparently designed to represent Akbar himself, is introduced in company with a Jew, a Christian, a Brahmin, and a Moslem; he confutes them all in succession, and then details the articles of his own creed. The declaration would be merely a matter of curiosity were it a representation of Akbar's sentiments only, but it is fundamentally the same as the creed of the Sikhs, a new people, whose rapid advance under Runjeet Sing, has recently assumed an important and perhaps a formidable aspect, and it contains the germs of that philosophic infidelity, which is unfortunately becoming prevalent among the educated classes of the Brahmins and Mussulmans.

All being silent, the philosopher thus addressed the assembly: "Know for certain, that the ac-
" complished apostle and perfect messenger from
" God is the illustrious Akbar; that is the im-
" perial wisdom, on whom be the blessings of
" God! Nor can you require a stronger proof
" than this, his being from his own essence skilled
" in all knowledge, and that his precepts are such

"as are intelligible to the understandings of all "men. And since reasons proves that a wise "and almighty Creator has formed this world, "and has showered many blessings on the inhabi- "tants of this temporary abode, which are de- "serving of praise and thanksgiving, let us, as "far as the light of our understandings will ena- "ble us, meditate on the mysteries of his crea- "tion, and render praises unto him according to "the extent of our knowledge of his sublime "perfections. Then when we have obtained such "knowledge, and have been led into the right "path, should we deny his unity and become un- "mindful of his benefits, shall we not deservedly "incur punishment? Since such is the case, "why should we pay obedience to any man, who "was a mortal like ourselves, and was subject to "anger, and lust, and covetousness, and pain, "and joy, and love of rank and power, even more "than ourselves. For if this mortal should "teach knowledge and thanksgiving, we have "been already made acquainted with these by the "assistance of our own understandings; and if "he should teach what is contrary to reason, "this would alone be a sufficient proof of his "falsehood. For reason assures us, that the "Creator of this world is wise, and a wise being "would not prescribe to the created any worship "which would appear to their reasons to be evil, "since what appears evil cannot remain perma- "nent. Now, all religions are founded on cir- "cumstances which must be considered as evil, "such as believing in the conversations of God, "the incarnation of the incorporeal essence in a "human form, and his reascension into heaven

"in a human body; the ascension of men into "heaven; the pilgrimage to particular edifices, "and the ceremonies attending it; the throwing "of stones, and running between two hils, and "and kissing the black stone. For if it be said, "that it is impossible to adore God without some "visible medium, and that it is therefore neces-"sary to have some fixed point to which the "mind can attach itself, it is evident that, for "remembering and praising God, no medium "nor particular place is at all requisite. But if "they should be admitted to be necessary, the "sun and the planets deserve the preference. "Yet neither can be considered as exempt from "a resemblance to Paganism, though the devout "respect paid to particular edifices is most objec-"tionable, as their being called the house of "God may induce the ignorant to ascribe a "corporeal form to God; and as also different "prophets have conferred a sanctity on different "places, such as the Kabba and Jerusalem. "Since therefore a resemblance to Paganism "exists in all worship of stone, earth, and cor-"poreal forms, the most proper objects on which "to fix the mind are fire, water, and the planets. "If then any object be necessary, let it be the "sun and the planets." He continues in the same strain to argue on the inconsistencies and defects in different systems of faith, displaying, through his entire argument, great ingenuity, no ordinary share of common sense, a thorough knowledge of the weak points in the Mohammedan system.

Akbar selected as the test of his religion, the consonance of his doctrines with reason, a

phrase plausible in sound, but which may mean any thing or nothing, just as the propounder pleases to interpret it. An ordinance to which the seals of most of the theologians, doctors of the law, and learned men throughout the empire were appended, appeared, in which it was declared that the interests of religion required that the emperor should be declared sole protector of the faith. Seveal Mohammedans and Hindús at once declared their readiness to embrace the imperial creed; and Akbar, encouraged by this success, ordered the old confession of faith, "God is God, and Mohammed is his prophet," to be discontinued, and that in its stead the following formula should be used: "there is no God but God, and Akbar is the vicar of God."

As the religion which Akbar wished to introduce was nearly a pure Deism, he abolished rather than instituted forms and rites. Thus he "abrogated the five daily prayers, ablution, fasts, alms and pilgrimage, as performed by the Mohammedans, the assembly for worship on Fridays, and the Muezzins, or criers of the mosques; he ordered to be considered as clean, what was unclean by the Moslem law; he permitted the sale of wine and games of chance; and he forbade the marriage of more than one wife, and the circumcision of boys until they were twelve years of age, when the ceremony was to be left entirely optional."* He even attempted to efface the memory of the ancient religion, by ordering the era of his accession to be used instead of the Hegira. The Schiites were at first disposed to favour these innova-

* *Bombay Transactions*, vol. ii. p. 266.

tions, because they afforded them a triumph over the Sunnites. They readily joined the emperor in denouncing the absurdities and contradictions in the various collections of traditions, and liberally bestowed invective on the companions of the prophets; but in the ardour of controversy they forgot the dictates of prudence, and saw too late that they had shaken the foundations of their own creed, whilst striving to subvert that of their adversaries. This, indeed, is not the only instance in which imprudent controversialists have supplied weapons to the infidel.

Akbar proceeded much more slowly with the Hindús, for he probably dreaded to encounter their obstinacy in adhering to ancient institutions. He issued no edict against idolatry, a fact not every consistent with his pretended zeal for maintaining in its purity the doctrine of the divine unity; he, however, ordered trials by ordeal to be discontinued, and forbade the burning of widows at the funeral-pile of their husbands, but the latter edict he was subsequently compelled to revoke. It is well known that, notwithstanding their gross idolatry, the Brahmins profess to believe in one Supreme God; this doctrine they put prominently forward when their system is attacked by Christian or Mohammedan missionaries, and of course they insisted strongly upon it in all their conversations with the emperor; at least they do so in all the conferences recorded in the *Dabistan*. This encouraged the emperor to persevere, but we do not find among his converts a single Hindú of high caste.

Philosophic deism can never be a popular, and

still less a national creed; it is utterly at variance with the laws of human nature; its existence is ideal and shadowy, it affords grounds for no hopes, room for no gratitude, exercise for no desire, object for no love. Forms of devotions may indeed be mistaken for the substance, but without the forms, devotion itself must wither and fade, and man remain alone in the world, without confidence for the present, and without hope for the future. Akbar soon discovered that a ritual was necessary for his new religion, and after much reflection he resolved to take his forms and ceremonies from the creed of Zoroaster. It is unnecessary to repeat minutely the different institutions he recommended, but the chief was reverence for the sun and the planets, as the most glorious symbols of Deity.

One of his institutions would to most Europeans appear of very trifling importance, and yet it seems to have been the rock on which his whole plan was finally shipwrecked. He forbade his subjects to wear beards, and thus gave more offence than by all his abuse of Mohammed, and ridicule of the incarnations of Bhahma. The rest of his reign was spent in an idle contest with his subjects; the new religion only spread where the court had influence, and when Akbar's son Jehangueir ascended the throne, Islamism was restored without a struggle,

But though Akbar's innovations failed to obtain a public and permanent establishment, we must not conclude that their influence has been destroyed. His creed indeed nearly resembles that of the Mohammedan Sofies, who reject the Korán and deny the divine mission of Moham-

med; and that of the Himdús of the Vedanti school, who are in fact complete sceptics. Since his reign Islamism in India, as we shall soon see, has been greatly adulterated by the introduction of Brahminical doctrines and ceremonies; and we cannot doubt but that much of the success of the Sikh creed, must be attributed to the labours of the emperor.

Considerable interest had been excited by the rapid progress of the Sikh power, under the able monarch Runjeet Sing, who was the ruler of the Sikhs. It is, however, necessray to remark that the Sikhs must be regarded politically as a Hindú sect, though their religion, like that of Akbar, is founded on a mixture of Brahminism and Mohammedanism. The following brief description of the sect and its founder, extracted from the Siyar-ul-Mutakherin,* will show how essentially it differs from any sect that has sprung up within the bosom of Brahminism. "These people (the Sikhs), from their "birth, or from the moment of their admission, "if they enter as proselytes, never cut or shave "their beards and whiskers, or any hair what- "ever of their body. They form a particular "society, which distinguishes itself by wearing "blue garments, and going armed at all times. "When a person is once admitted into their "fraternity, they make no scruple of associating "with him, of whatever tribe, clan, or race he "may have hitherto been, nor do they betray "any of those scruples and prejudices so deeply "rooted in the Hindú mind. This sect or frater- "nity, which first became powerful about the

* Published by the Oriental Translation Committee, vol. i. p. 109.

" latter end of Aurengzebe's reign, has for its " chief Gurú Govind, one of the successors of " Nanac Gurú the founder of the sect. Nanac " was the son of a grain-merchant of the Katri " tribe, who in his youth was as remarkable for " his good qualities, as for the beauty of his " person and for his talents. Nor was he desti- " tute of fortune. There was then in those " parts a dervish of note, called Seíd Hossein, a " a man of eloquence as well as wealth, who " having no children of his own, and being " struck with the beauty of the young Nanac, " conceived a great regard for him, and charged " himself with his education. As the young " man was early introduced to the knowledge of " the most esteemed writings of Islám, and ini- " tiated into the principles of our most approved " doctrines, he advanced so much in learning, " and became so fond of his studies, that he " made it a practice in his leisure hours to trans- " late literally, and make notes and extracts of " our moral maxims. Those which made the " deepest impression upon him were written in " the dialect of the Punjab, his maternal lan- " guage. At length he connected them into or- " der, and put them into verse. By this time " he had so far shaken off those prejudices of " Hindúism, which he had imbibed with his " milk, that he became quite another man. His " collection becoming extensive it took the form " of a book, which he entitled Granth, and he " became famous in the time of the emperor " Baber, (the grandfather of Akbar,) from " which time he was followed by multitudes of " converts. This book is to this day held in so

" great veneration and esteem amongst the Sikhs " that they never touch or read it without " assuming a respectful posture, and, in reality " it is a compound of what Nanac has found " most valuable in those books which he had " been perusing."

This passage, from an author deservedly called the Mohammedan Burnet, clearly shows that Nanac derived his religious principles from some of the Mohammedan sects. Mr. Horace Hayman Wilson, professor of Sanscrit in the University of Oxford, has shown that Kabir, a celebrated saint among the Mussulmans, though of Hindú descent, was the author from whom Nanac borrowed most largely his Unitarian doctrines. Kabir was equally venerated by the Hindús and Mussulmans; after his death a contest arose for his body, the former wishing to burn, the latter to bury it; "during this dispute," say the legends, " his body disappeared."

We have frequently mentioned that the principles of the Mohammedan Sufies, and of the Hindús of the Vedanti school, are those usually called philosophical deism. Kabir, if we may judge from some specimens of his poetry, was a decided Sufi, and taught the indifference of forms of worship. Nanac himself practically conformed to the habits of the Mohammedan fakirs, though some of the austerities to which he subjected himself belong rather to the ancient religions of India. Though he devotes most of his writings to the praise of the one true God, he speaks of the Hindú polytheism with respect, and even with reverence; he entreats the Mohammedans to abstain from the slaughter of cows,

so offensive to Brahminical prejudices; and he forbade the Hindús to eat swine's flesh, the abomination of every Moslem. When the partisans of both religions disputed before him, on the excellence of their respective systems of faith, he said, " Without the practice of true piety both " religions are wrong, and if rectitude be want- " ing neither Hindú nor Moslem will be accept- " able before the throne of God; for the faded " tinge of scarlet that has been soiled by water " will never return. You both deceive your- " selves, pronouncing aloud Ram (a Hindú name " of God), and Rahim (a Mohammedan epithet " of Deity, signifying *the Merciful,*) and the way " of Satan prevails in the universe."

On every occasion Nanac showed great courage in the maintenance of his opinions. He was once insulted and beaten by a bigoted Mollah, for lying on the ground with his feet turned towards the Keblah, or direction in which the sacred temple of Mecca is supposed to stand. " Dost thou dare, wicked infidel," exclaimed the irritated priest of Islám, " to turn thy unclean " feet towards the holy temple of God?"—" Turn " them, if it be in your power," replied Nanac, " in a direction where the temple of God is " not."

Of Mohammed, Nanac gave the following character: " That prophet was sent by God to " this world, to do good, and to disseminate the " knowledge of the one God through means of " the Korán; but he acting on the principles of " free-will, which all human beings exercise, in- " troduced oppression and cruelty, and the " slaughter of cows, for which he died." It is

singular to find the founder of the Sikhs, adhering so fondly to the Hindú reverence for the cow, at the moment that he was castings off the essential doctrines of the Brahminical faith; but such conduct is not without a parallel: the writer of this work is acquainted with a Turkish gentleman, converted to Christianity many years ago, who has not even yet been able to overcome his antipathy to swine's flesh. Of himself Nanac said, " I am now sent from heaven to publish " unto mankind a book, which shall reduce all " the names given to God, to one name, which " is God, and he who calls him by any other " name shall fall into the path of the devil, and " have his feet bound in the chains of wretched" ness; you have," said he to the Mohammedans, " despoiled the temples, and burned the sacred " Védas of the Hindús, and you have dressed " yourself in dresses of blue, and you delight to " have your praises sung from house to house; " but I, who have seen all the world, tell you, " that the Hindús equally hate you and your " mosques. I am sent to reconcile your jarring " faiths, and I implore you to read their scrip" tures as well as your own; but reading is use" less without obedience to the doctrine taught; " for God has said, no man shall be saved except " he has performed good works. The Almighty " will not ask to what tribe or persuasion he be" longs. He will only ask what he has done. " Therefore those violent and continued dis" putes, which subsist between the Hindús and " Mussulmans, are as impious as they are unjust. " Hundreds of thousands of prophets stand at " the gates of the Most High. These all perish,

" God alone is immortal. Yet men who unite " in the praise of God, are not ashamed of " living in contention with each other, which " proves that the evil spirit has subdued all. " He alone is a true Hindú whose heart is just, " and he only is a good Mohammedan whose " life is pure."

Nanac founded a sect rather than a religion; many of his principles resembled those of the people called Quakers, especially his prohibition of oaths, and of war. " Put on armour," said he, " that will harm no one; let thy coat of mail " be that of understanding, and convert thy ene- " mies to friends. Fight with valour, but use no " weapon except the word of God." These instructions so nearly correspond with those of the emperor Akbar, that we may easily believe, the progress of the Sikh doctrines to have been encouraged during his reign. But when Jehangueir revived the intolerence of Islamism in the Mogul dominions, the Sikhs were persecuted as a heretical sect, and in the year 1606, (the first of Jehangueir's reign,) the Mohammedans of the Punjab procured the imprisonment of Arjún-mal, the fourth successor of Nanac in the presidency of the Sikhs. Arjún died from the severity of the treatment he had received, and this was regarded by his followers as an atrocious murder committed by the Mohammedan government. The Sikhs chose for their new sovereign Har Góvind, and he commenced his rule by the important declaration, that it was permitted to his followers to use arms in their own defence. In consequence of this permission, the Sikhs were changed from a peaceable inoffensive sect, into a

race of formidable warriors, eager for revenge, and inspired with a fierce hatred against the followers of Mohammed. It is said that Har Góvind wore two swords at his girdle; and being asked the reason, this Gúrú or military priest answered, "One is to revenge the murder of my father, the other to exterminate the followers of Mohammed."

During the reign of Aurengzebe, the glory of the Mogul dynasty was at its zenith; the Mohammedan faith was every where triumphant, the Sikhs had never acquired any real strength, and they were greatly distracted by dissensions among themselves. But after the death of Aurengzebe, another Góvind, who had also a father's martyrdom to revenge, became their spiritual leader or Gúrú, and commenced a moral revolution, the greatest that ever has been attempted in India. Nanac had abstained from all interference with the civil institutions of the Hindús, but Gúrú Góvind boldly attacked the whole frame-work of Hindú society by the abolition of caste. He declared that all who entered his sect were on a level, and that "the Brahmin who adopted his tenets had no higher claim to eminence than the lowest Sudra who swept his house." The paths of wealth and glory were thus opened to all who joined his standard, and the inferior tribes, excluded for ages from all the roads of honourable ambition by the tyranny of caste, readily joined the daring innovator, who promised to abolish their degrading thraldom. The Mohammedans at once saw that the foundation of their empire was shaken; the law that excluded the greater part of the population

of India from the use of arms, rendered the conquerors secure from the dangers of a general insurrection; but it was clear, that if Góvind's innovations were adopted, the Mahomedans might be driven beyond the Indus by the mere force of numbers. It was resolved to wage immediate war against the propounder of such dangerous doctrines, and the contest was carried on with equal cruelty on both sides. "Gúrú Govind," says the Siyaz-ul-Mutakherin, "having succeeded to his father, re-organized his "numerous bands into companies or troops, "which he put under the command of his most "faithful disciples, to whom he gave orders to "provide themselves with arms and horses. As "soon as he saw them accoutred and mounted, "he commenced plundering the country and "raising contributions. This conduct did not "long go unpunished, the military commanders "of the provinces uniting, fell upon the free-"booters, and dispersed them; and Gúrú Gó-"vind's two sons having fallen alive into their "hands were put to death. The father's situa-"tion was now become nearly as dangerous: "hunted down like a wild beast, he retired to a "strong-hold; but he was precluded from escap-"ing to his family and country beyond Sirhind, "the intermediate space being full of troops. "In this critical situation he applied to the Af-"ghans beyond Sirhind, and promised them a large "sum of money if they would conduct him to a "place of safety. A number of these people "accepted the proposal, and coming down from "their mountains, recommended him to let his "beard and whiskers, and the hair of every

" other part of his body, grow; and then clothing " him in a short blue tunic, like that worn by " themselves, brought him out of his retreat, " and carried him through the whole country in " perfect safety. Whenever any one inquired " who he was, they answered that he was one of " their holy men of the town of Oucha. Gúrú " Góvind having been so lucky as to extricate " himself out of this difficulty, retained the " Afghan garb in memory of that event, and he " thenceforward made it the distinctive dress of " his followers. No one was from that time re- " ceived as a proselyte, unless his beard and hair " were long, and unless he adopted the garb of " the proper pattern. The loss of his children " so deeply affected Gúrú Góvind, that he died " of grief."

Benda, the successor of Góvind, for some time maintained the fortunes of the sect against an amazing disparity of force, but he was at length defeated, made prisoner, and put to death by torture. The Mohammedans made a cruel use of their victory; orders were issued for the execution, without trial, of all who followed the doctrines of Nanac, immense multitudes were slain, and the remnant of the Sikhs sought refuge in the mountains. In the decline of the Mongolian empire, about the middle of the last century, they recovered their strength, and became masters of the Punjáb. During the Mahratta war, at the beginning of the present century, their intestine divisions rendered them weak and powerless; but since their recent union, under Runjeet Sing, they became the most formidable power in south-western Asia.

Thus we see that two attempts have been made in India, to form a new religion from the discordant creeds of Brahma and Mohammed, that of Akbar by a Mohammedan, that of Nanac by a Hindú. Neither effort could have been made if there were not some elements of approximation discoverable in the two religions, and those we believe to be very striking. In tracing the history of the formation of the Mohammedan faith, we have shown that it borrowed many doctrines and practices from the religion of the ancient Persians, and we have established, at least a probability, that Zerdusht or Zoroaster derived no small portion of his creed from Indian sources. The establishment of the Shiah sect in middle Asia, was followed by the introduction of many of the old Magian superstitions into the creed of Islám, so that when Mahmoud of Ghizni introduced Mohammedanism into India, he brought thither a religion which had many principles in common with the native faith of Hindústan. It is no slight confirmation of these opinions, to find the emperor Akbar taking the religion of the ancient Persians as the middle ground on which he might expect to unite his Hindú and Moslem subjects.

The success of the Sikh creed gave rise to other and different speculations; had Runjeet been an enthusiast instead of a politician, he might have changed the fate of India once more. The history of his sect proves that a mixture of Mohammedans and Hindús is not quite so hopeless an undertaking as it is generally believed to be; that the chains of caste may be broken by some daring innovator, and that the Hindús, a

race generally so submissive and tractable, may, under the influence of religious enthusiasm, become as furious and as formidable as the warriors of the Scythian deserts.

But it must not be imagined, that these are the only examples of a mixture between the Mohammedan and Brahminical religions in India. Hindú corruptions have penetrated the whole creed of Islám in that country; usages inconsistent with the spirit of the Korán, and some contrary to its literal precepts, have been adopted; personages who were not even Mussulmans have been elevated to the rank of saints, and semi-pagan festivals instituted to commemorate them. The festivals observed by the India Mohammedans have been recently described by Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali, an English lady who had married a Moslem, and also in the *Qanoon-e-Islâm*, a treatise on Indian Mohammedanism, written by a native and translated by Dr. Herklots, To these works we refer our readers; they will find, especially in the latter, full proof that the Mohammedans of India have substituted the worship of saints, with but little change, for the idolatrous worship of the Hindú subordinate deities.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EFFECTS OF THE MOHAMMEDAN RELIGION ON SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND CIVILIZATION.

WAR is deservedly esteemed a scourge of the human race, but war is not always an unmixed evil, like the tempests that sweep over the sky, armies not unfrequently clear away all that was stagnant and noxious, and open room for the growth of that which will be vigorous and wholesome. In the early part of this volume we described the degraded condition of the human intellect both in Europe and Asia, when first Mohammed appeared as a prophet; barbaric pride and luxury oppressed the West; effeminacy, meanness, and treachery ruled in the East; Rome and Constantinople seemed equally incapable of reformation, and it required a violent exertion to break the fetters which indolence, superstition, and fraud had combined to impose upon mankind. We regard the rapid career and wondrous victories of the Saracens as among the causes of the existing European civilization, and we shall therefore cast a hasty glance at their progress.

We have already seen how favourable the condition of Arabia was to the formation of a bold and hardy race of warriors, full of a chivalrous spirit, reckless of life, ardent for fame, eager to place their feet on the necks of prostrate nations; on the other hand, we beheld the Byzantine empire distracted by faction, dishonoured by profligate intrigue, and demoralized by the

unblushing exhibition of unmanly vices in the rulers, both of church and state. A similar picture was exhibited in Persia, for it seemed as if the glorious reign of Nushirvan was

Like the last flashes, fierce and few,
Seen from some noble pile on fire.

It appears from this simple statement, that from the very commencement of the contest between the young power of the Saracens, and the decayed governments of Constantinople and Ctesiphon, the issue could not be doubtful, but this consideration by no means diminishes our astonishment at the extent and rapidity of the Saracenic conquests. Within a century they had extended their sway in Asia from the Mediterranean to the frontiers of China; while towards the west, northern Africa was theirs from the Nile to the Atlantic; Spain lay prostrate, several provinces of France were subdued, and the project of the Saracenic general, Músa, to march from the Pyrenees to the Bosphorus, for the purpose of joining in the siege of Constantinople, seemed not only feasible, but would probably have been accomplished, had not death cut short his career.

Still more wonderful were the naval triumphs of this extraordinary people; in the days of Mohammed, so dreaded was the sea by the Arabs, that he declared its intervention would be a valid excuse for not performing the pilgrimage to Mecca; a generation had not passed away when their flag floated triumphant in the Mediterranean, Crete was taken, and the islands in the south of the Archipelago shared its fate; Sicily fell a prey to the Mohammedans of northern Africa, and they

also obtained permanent establishments in Corsica, Sardinia, and the south of Italy.

There was necessarily much suffering inflicted, but there was also much evil removed. The Saracens were more generous enemies, and more lenient rulers than the Greeks and the Persians. The provincials of Northern Africa, crushed and degraded by the galling tyranny of the Byzantine court, hailed the Saracens as liberators; and even the Spaniards found the Moorish yoke more tolerable than that of their Gothic sovereigns. "The strong," says an old writer, "can afford to be generous, the weak ever seek "protection in cruelty, and hence has arisen the "common remark, that there is no tyranny like "the tyranny of fear."

Though a nomade race in their own country, the Saracens, ere the second century of their power, had become the best agriculturists and the most enterprising merchants of the period. They founded new cities as commercial marts on all the great highways of trade through their extensive dominions, and the wisdom that dictated their choice was proved by the rapidity with which these cities attained wealth and eminence. To facilitate the cultivation of the fields, canals were cut, whose stupendous remains at this day excite admiration. It is true that all these improvements have been swept away by "the changes of realm and the chances of time," but especially by the substitution of Turkish for Saracenic dominion, still we must remember "such things were," and consider how beneficial was their example.

In estimating the effect of the Saracenic wars

on European civilization, we must not omit to mention the Crusades. It is true, that during these wars, the Christians fought not against the Saracens, but against the conquerors of the Saracens, the Turks and Tartars. Still it is scarcely possible to read the history of the period, without perceiving that the Crusades were, in fact, the reaction produced by the Saracenic conquests; at least, that they effected what such conquests rendered necessary, the erection of a barrier against the further progress of Islamism. It may be said, that if this were the case, the result should have been earlier produced, and the European movement should be found nearer to the time when the Khaliphs were the most potent monarchs of the world. To this objection the answer is easy; the effect was produced individually, for many volunteers joined the French and Spanish armies that warred against the Moors; but it was not produced nationally, for the swarms had not yet ceased to issue from the wilds of Scandinavia, that kept western Europe in constant dread of a more imminent and more formidable danger than was threatened by the progress of the Saracens. Besides, after the first great burst, the Saracens settled down into luxurious tranquillity, and sought no new acquisitions. Finally, it was not until the Turkish age that Christendom acquired that centralization of feeling necessary for a united effort; that spirit of religious enthusiasm which simultaneously inspired every nation, however different in language or opposed in interests. Just as Mohammed had made Islamism a bond of union between the hostile tribes of Arabia,

did the Popes make their creed the chain that bound Christendom into one body. It would be very strange if, during the long period of its existence, the Papacy had never been found to work some good, and it certainly deserves to be set down to its credit, that it checked the torrent of Turkish invasion, at the precise moment when that invasion was most likely to effect its greatest evils.

The causes and consequences of the crusades have been the theme of lengthened controversy; it seems probable that they ought not to be ascribed to any single cause. The barons and knights may have fought to recover the crown-lands of their lord, and regarded the recovery of Palestine as a feudal service; the meaner volunteers may have been actuated by simple fanaticism; countless adventurers may have been actuated by mere love of enterprise, a desire for plunder, or a vague hope of improving their fortunes, but the great object of Gregory VII. was to secure Christendom from the ruin by which it was threatened. It was by Gregory, beyond all controversy, that these wars were projected, though the movement was commenced by his successor, Urban V.

The beneficial consequences of the crusades have been sometimes denied, rarely indeed of late years, but the impugners of these wars include names that must not be lightly passed over, since those of Gibbon and Robertson are among the number. This is not the place to enter into the controversy; but we must mention one result from them, which has never been controverted. It was during the latter crusades that a spirit of

humanity was first introduced into war, and lenity to the captive, and the fallen, ranked in the number of military virtues.

It has been commonly supposed that the government of the Khaliphs was an absolute despotism: no supposition can be more erroneous, there never was a more perfect democracy than that which existed under the four first successors of Mohammed. The monarch was elective, his power was limited, not only by the laws of the Korán, but by the unwritten traditions of the prophet; public opinion controlled every important action, and the meanest soldier possessed a liberty of remonstrance, which would scarcely have been permitted even in a republican army. Time wrought a change in this system, the transference of empire from the Saracens to the Turks completed its overthrow. But even at this moment, the Mussulman sovereigns, universally regarded as autocrats, dare not openly violate any of the ordinances prescribed by their religion. The doctors of law, who unite the professions of theology and jurisprudence, constitute a power in the state, ready, at every moment to encounter the monarch that would venture to violate the Korán or the traditions. Evliya Effendi, whose *Travels* have been just published by the Oriental Translation Committee, relates a curious anecdote which illustrates the power possessed by these clerical lawyers over the Turkish sultan.

"Mohammed II. being a very passionate monarch, severely rebuked his architect for not having built his mosque of the same height as Aya Sofiyah (Saint Sophia); and for having cut

down the columns, which were each worth the whole tribute of Rúm (Asia Minor.) The architect excused himself by saying, that he had reduced the two columns three cubits each, in order to give his building more security and strength against the earthquakes so common in Istámbol (Constantinople); and had thus made the mosque lower than Aya Sofiyah. The emperor, not satisfied with this excuse, ordered the architect's hands to be cut off, which was done accordingly. On the following day the architect appeared with his family before the tribunal of the Kazi (civil and ecclesiastical judge), styled Istambol Mollasi (Constantinopolitan judgment-seat,) to lay his complaint against the emperor, and appeal to the sentence of the law. The judge immediately sent his officer to cite the emperor to appear in court. The imperial conqueror, on hearing this summons, said, 'The command of the Prophet's Law must be obeyed!' and putting on his mantle, and thrusting a mace into his belt, went into the court of law. After having given the Salam Aleikom (customary greeting) he was about to seat himself in the highest place, when the Kazi said, 'Sit not down, O prince! but atand on thy feet together with thine adversary, who has made an appeal to the law.' The architect then made his complaint: 'My Lord, I am a perfect master-builder, and a skilful mathematician; but this man, because I made his mosque low, and cut down two of his columns, has mutilated me of both hands, which has ruined me, and deprived me of the means of supporting my family: it is thy part to pronounce the sentence of the noble law.'

The judge upon this addressed the emperor, 'What sayest thou, prince, hast thou caused this man's hands to be cut off innocently?' The emperor immediately replied, 'By Heaven, my lord! this man lowered my mosque; and for having diminished two columns of mine, each worth the produce of Misr (Egypt), thus robbing my mosque of all renown by making it so low, I did cut off his hands; it is for thee to pronounce the sentence of the noble law.' The Kazi answered, 'Prince, renown is a misfortune. If a mosque be upon a plain, and low and open, worship in it is not thereby prevented. If each column had been a precious stone, its value would have been only that of a stone; but the hands of this man, which have enabled him for these forty years to subsist by his skilful workmanship, you have illegally cut off. He can henceforth do no more than attend to his domestic affairs. The maintenance of him and his numerous family necessarily, by law, falls upon thee. What sayest thou, prince?' Sultan Mohammed answered, 'Thou must pronounce the sentence of the law!'—'This is the legal sentence,' replied the Kazi, 'if the architect requires the law to be strictly enforced, your hands must be cut off; for if a man do an illegal act, which the noble law doth not allow, that law decrees that he be requited according to his deeds.' The Sultan then offered to grant the architect a pension from the public treasury of the Mussulmans. 'No,' replied the Molla (doctor of law), 'it is not lawful to take this from the public treasury; the offence was yours: my sentence therefore is, that from your own private purse you allow this

maimed man ten aspers a-day.'—'Let it be twenty aspers a-day,' said the conqueror;* 'but let the cutting off his hands be legalized.' The architect in the contentment of his heart exclaimed, 'Be it accounted lawful in this world and the next;' and having received a patent for his pension, withdrew. Sultan Mohammed also received a certificate of his entire acquittal. The Kazi then apologized for having treated him as an ordinary suitor; pleading the rigid impartiality of the law, which requires justice to be administered to all without distinction; and entreated the emperor to seat himself on the sacred carpet. 'Effendi,' said the Sultan, somewhat irritated, and drawing out the mace from the skirt of his robe, 'if thou hadst shown favour to me, saying to thyself, *This is the sultan*, and hadst wronged the architecet, I would have broken thee to pieces with this mace.'"

In the Byzantine and Persian empires, justice was openly bought and sold: corruption was not merely tolerated, but avowed; bribes were offered and accepted in public. On the contrary, the Saracens established a rigid administration of law, and so strict was their system of criminal justice, that the sovereign, for many years, had not the power of pardoning a man whom the judges had condemned. Moáwiyah was the first who exercised the prerogative of mercy, being prevailed upon to arrest the course of justice by the beauty of the verses in which the culprit solicited pardon.

The feudal system, which so long was the disgrace and bane of Europe, had no place among

* Mohammed II. was the conqueror of Constantinople.

the Saracens; whilst throughout Christendom honest industry was regarded as the sign of subjection, and trade esteemed disgraceful, the Arabs gave every encouragement to labour and commerce. The countries that they subdued were long free from the fatal influence of feudalism; it has never penetrated into Corsica; it was unknown in Sardinia, Sicily, and Lower Italy, until after the expulsion of the Moors. In consequence of the protection and patronage granted to industry by the Saracenic monarchs, especially in Spain, agriculture and manufactures flourished, and commercial communications were formed, which extended from the extreme east of Asia* to the extreme west of Europe. The few manufactures which still exist in Spain are those that the Moors established. Perhaps it would not be too much to say, that it is to the example of the Saracens we are indebted for the progress of maritime discovery; since Spain and Portugal, whence the expeditions sailed that discovered America and the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, had learned the art of navigation from their Saracenic masters. Of the Arabians it might be said, with as much truth as of the Romans,

> Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes,
> Intulit agresto.
>
> When conquer'd Greece brought in her captive arts,
> She triumph'd o'er her savage conquerors' hearts.
>
> FRANCIS.

Scarcely had the Arabians permanently established themselves in western Asia, than they began

* About a century after the death of Mohammed, the Saracens established a factory at Canton.

to cultivate the sciences possessed by the vanquished, with a zeal and earnestness to which history furnishes no parallel. Unfortunnately the literature of Greece is so completely blended with mythology, that it was at once rejected by the Mohammedans, whose hatred of idolatry was blind and indiscriminate. They thus lost the advantage of improving their growing literature by the correct taste and bold spirit of the Greeks; but the romance of Antar proves that they had among themselves, at least the elements of literary strength and beauty.

Al Mansúr, who ascended the throne about a century after the death of Mohammed, was the first great patron of learning among the Khaliphs: he made no distinction between the men of letters, in whose society he delighted, on account of their religious opinions; an illustrious example of the intimate connexion between sound knowledge and a tolerant spirit. By him Bagdad was made the capital of the empire, and the foundation laid of that splendour which has identified the name of that city with all our notions of oriental magnificence. Shortly after his removal to that city, he proved that he was not a slave to the bigoted maxims of the Korán by employing a Christian physician, named George ebn-Bakhtishua. He tried, indeed, to convert him, but George turned the matter off with a jest, saying, "O emperor of the faithful, I am determined to go to the place where my ancestors reside in the other world, whether that be paradise or hell." The Khaliph burst into a roar of laughter, and ceased from further importunity. It must, however, be confessed, that Al Mansúr

was something of a humourist, with whom a witty saying was likely to be of more avail than a serious argument; for the speech he addressed to his son, a few hours before his death, is as curious a specimen of comic satire as any we have seen, "Al Mohdi." said the dying Khaliph, "I command you always to treat your rela-"tions with respect, for their honour will be "reflected back upon you: but this I believe "you will not do. Increase the number of your "freedmen, and treat them with kindness, for "they will give you aid should fortune change: "but this I believe you will not do. Enlarge "not that part of the city on the eastern bank "of the Tigris, for if you begin the work you "will never be able to finish it: this, however, "I know you will attempt. Permit not your "wives to interfere in the affairs of state; and "this you will assuredly allow. So, farewell."

Harún al Rashid, the grandson of Al Mansúr, is known to most persons as the hero of the Arabian Night; it is sufficient here to say, that the character given of him in that celebrated work of fiction, as the generous patron of the arts and sciences, is historically correct. But his glory was eclipsed by that of his son Al Mansúr, who is justly termed the Augustus of the Saracens.

Al Mansúr, after having vanquished the forces of the Greek emperor, Michael III., was entreated to grant peace on any terms; all that he demanded from the conquered was copies of the works of the best Greek authors, and these he brought to Bagdad in triumphal procession, as the noblest trophies of victory. Before the close

of his reign the Arabians had become well acquainted with the medicine, philosophy, mathematics, and natural history of the Greeks; and possessed good translations of the works of Hippocrates, Galen, Theophrastus, Ptolemy, Euclid, and Aristotle. The astronomical works of Al Forgani, written during this reign, were translated into Latin by Golius, and still possess considerable repute among the learned. It deserves to be remarked, that some of the more bigoted Mohamedans regarded the introduction of science with suspicion, and accused the Khaliph of heresy. Some of these men forced their way into Mansúr's chamber, a little before his death, and demanded of him to pronounce some prayer that would prove his orthodoxy. The Khaliph gratified them, lifting his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "O thou, who never diest, have mercy on thy dying servant."

The ancient historians dwell with great complacency on the flourishing state of the arts and sciences during the reign of Al Mamún. But in their eulogies we find a singular example of man's blindness to futurity. "The Khaliph," says Abulfaragius, "knew that philosophers are the "persons whom God has chosen to develop the "reason of his creatures, and elevate their de-"sires above the things coveted by the brutes, "the Turks, and the Chinese." He little knew that in a few years after these lines were traced, the Turks, whom he thus clsses with the inferior animals, would be the masters of the Saracenic empire.

It would be unpardonable to omit, in this sketch, the generous patronage afforded to lite-

rature by the noble house of the Barmecides. The first of this family that became conspicuous was Yahya-ebn-Khaled ebn-Barmac, who was appointed tutor to Harún al Rashid by the Khaliph Al Mohdi. Yahya claimed descent from the ancient kings of Persia, and was treated by the Khaliph more as an equal than a subject; he possessed a princely fortune, which he expended in the patronage of the arts, and he laboured successfully to inspire his pupil with similar taste and generosity. At his death Yahya left behind him four sons, who by no means degenerated from their father's virtues, but on the contrary, raised the glory and greatness of the Barmecides to the highest pitch. The most illustrious of the four was Jaafar, known to every reader of the *Arabian Nights* as the vizier of Al Rashid. After having been long the greatest ornaments of that brilliant court, the Barmecides, from some circumstances which the historians do not very fully explain, incurred the resentment of the Khaliph, and an edict was issued for their extermination. The fatal decree was mercilessly executed, and thus fell a family that had done more for the arts and sciences than any other that ever existed. Proclamations were issued, forbidding any person to mention the name of the Barmecides, under pain of death:

> But man's chainless heart
> Hides that within its depths which never yet
> The oppressor's thought could reach.*

An aged man of letters, named Mondic, who had long enjoyed the patronage of that noble family, refused obedience to the tyrannical pre-

* Mrs. Hemans's *Mourner for the Barmecides.*

cept. He placed himself on an eminence before one of their ruined palaces, pronounced a fervid eulogium on their virtues, recited all the services they had performed to the state, and bewailed their fate in terms that at once reached the hearts of his hearers. Crowds assembled round the daring and grateful orator; murmurs arose as from men, in whom fear and deep feeling struggled for mastery; there was reason to dread that excited passion would lead to open violence. Intelligence of these circumstances was conveyed to the Khaliph; he ordered Mondic to be arrested and brought before him. Harún, in a voice of thunder, demanded of him how he dared to disobey the imperial edict? Mondic, in reply, stated the obligations he was under to the house of Barmac, in language so powerful that the Khaliph himself was affectd, and not only gave him his life, but presented him with a golden dish that lay near. "See here," exclaimed Mondic, "another favour I have recived from "the house of Barmac!" An expression which has since passed into a proverb, current in every part of Asia. Harún found himself unable to suppress the fame of the Barmecides; their names are still quoted by Oriental historians, as synonymous with every thing that is elevated in sentiment, generous in disposition, and refined in taste.

The cultivation of literature among the Saracens produced more immediate effects on the general condition of the people, than the revival of learning did on the nations of Christendom. The Arabs had no learned language, all the knowledge acquired was published in the vulgar

tongue, and was freely open to all who sought information. Such an advantage they long possessed exclusively; notwithstanding the noble example of making knowledge easy of access, exhibited by the Moors in Spain, the vulgar tongues throughout the greater part of Europe were used only in discourse. All writing—literary, scientific, or political, was in Latin; even sermons were usually delivered in that language, though sometimes an interpretation was given for the edification of the audience. Even now the Romish Church keeps up the habit of celebrating the Mass in Latin, before congregations utterly ignorant of that language.

The Saracens of Spain rivalled, if they did not surpass, the literary excellence of their brethren in the East. Cordova was the western Bagdad, and from it the first knowledge of science was obtained by the descendants of the Goths and Vandals. Abd-'al-rahman, called to head the partisans of the Ommiyade house in the west, when the Abassides triumphed in the East, was a man of superior literary attainments. Remembering that the Ommiyades were descended from the old rulers of the Koreish, he resolved that the magnificence of his court should eclipse that of his rivals, the Abasside Khaliphs. There is a little poem of his on the first palm-tree introduced into Spain, which represents him in the midst of worldly greatness, regretting the scenes of his early youth. Its simplicity, which is its chief beauty, would be lost in a paraphrase, and we therefore must give the literal translation.

" Fair palm-tree, thou also art a stranger here!
" The gentle airs of Algarve court and kiss thee.

"Thy roots are fixed in a fertile soil; thy head "is erected towards Heaven; but thou too "wouldst shed tears of bitterness, if, like me, "thou couldst look back! But thou feelest not "as I do the calamities of fortune. I wept "under the palms which the Forat waters, when "my unhappy fate, and the cruelty of the Abas-"side, compelled me to forsake what I so dearly "loved. The trees and the river have forgotten "my sorrows, and thou, my beloved country, "retainest no remembrance of me! But never "shall I cease to lament for thee."

The sovereign that felt thus must have had great natural endowments, and the beauty with which he expresses his sentiments, leads us to give credit to the historian who calls Abd'-al rahman the best patron of literature, and the best example to literary men.

Architecture was the art in which the Spanish Saracens displayed most strength. Their mosques, palaces, and public halls, were erected on a scale of magnificence, beyond those displayed by Greece or Rome in their proudest days. To enumerate the remains of their splendid buildings would require several volumes; we need only mention the Alhambra, to show how great a share the Saracens had in reviving the architectural art in modern Europe. To them also we owe the science of chemistry, which was in fact the first branch of experimental philosophy, as it is still one of the most important. For it must be remembered that those who led the way to the cultivation of experimental science, Gerbert and Adelhard, had both studied in the Moorish universities. The obligations of mathematical sci-

ence to the Arabians are universally acknowledged, the very name of algebra proves its oriental origin; indeed Mohammed-ebn-Musa, who lived in the reign of the Khaliph Al Mamún, was long regarded as the inventor of that branch of science. This has been proved erroneous by reference to the work itself, which has been recently published by the Oriental Translation Committee, but the editor (Dr. Rosen) has ably shown that Ebn-Musa considerably extended and improved the mode of algebraic calculation.

It is not necessary to extend this subject further; those who wish to know more of the benefits conferred on modern Europe by the scientific and literary exertions of the Saracens, will find ample information in the Works of the Rev. Dr. Forster and Mr. Sharon Turner; enough has been said to show that the charge, commonly urged against the Mohammedan religion, of being adverse to knowledge and civilization, is a groundless calumny.

The progress of Saracenic civilization was checked by political commotion; it was finally destroyed by the Turks, who adopted a form of government that crushed every exertion of the intellect. It is, however, the form of Turkish policy not the nature of the Turkish religion, that has prevented the cultivation of science. The complete separation of the church from the state in that country; the formation of a body of doctors of the law, interested in preventing any thing like innovation, have been among the causes that prevented the Turks from ever emulating the literary glory of the Saracens. The Sheikh Refáa an intelligent Egyptian, sent by

Mehemet Ali to Paris for the purpose of becoming acquainted with European sciences, and teaching them after his return, has published an account of his travels, in which he endeavours to evade the charge of heresy with a dexterity which Galileo might have envied. "The French," he says, "excel in the practical sciences, and "possess also an intimate acquaintance with the "speculative sciences. They have, however, "certain philosophical opinions, which do not "accord with the belief of other nations. But "they support them so ably, and colour them so "eloquently that they have a strong semblance "of reality. In astronomy, for instance, they "are very learned and the aid of the instruments "they have invented has rendered them far superior to the ancients. But they have mingled "with this science some heretical opinions con"trary to the Holy Books, such as the assertion, "the earth resolves on its axis, &c. They sup"port these opinions by arguments which it is "difficult to refute. I could cite several of these "paradoxes, and will perhaps point them out to "the reader at a future period. At present I "shall only say, that their scientific works are "full of paradoxes of this kind. The Mussul"man who wishes to study French books, must "first attach himself strongly to the holy Korán "and the religious traditions, to secure himself "from the danger of having his faith weakened "or perverted." . . . He takes care, however, to insinuate, but very cautiously, more just opinions, "a wise European has pretended "that the assertion of the earth's revolution on "its axis, and its globuler shape, is not contra"dictory to the Holy Scriptures. In fact, he

"says, the sacred writings, in those passages "designed to convey man moral instruction, "have employed terms conformable to the ap- "pearance, of the phenomena, and not to scien- "tific exactness. Thus it is said, 'God caused "the sun to stand still;' that signifies he retarded "the moment of the disappearance of that "luminary, an effect produced, in reality, by the "suspension of the earth's motions. The Holy "Book speaks as if the sun itself had stood still, "because to the eye the sun appears to have "motion."

These extracts sufficiently show that the bigotry of the Turks is abating, and that they begin to regard European science with an eye of favour. They will probably never attain the same comparative eminence as the Saracens, but they will cease to be satisfied with the pride of ignorance, and no longer present a barrier to the reflux of knowledge from Europe to Asia.

CHAPTER X.

MOHAMMED'S NIGHT JOURNEY TO HEAVEN.

A FRIEND to whom the plan of this work was submitted, and who, to an intimate acquaintance with Oriental literature, adds the rarer qualification of sound judgment, recommended the author not to interrupt the course of his narrative by inserting the fable of the journey to heaven, in Mohammed's life, but to place it at the close of the volume, with such remarks as would illustrate the origin of this very extraordinary legend.

In the twelfth year of his preaching, Mohammed still continued his practice of retiring occasionally into the mountains, for the purpose

of meditating in solitude on the great task he had undertaken. During one of these excursions, he lay down to sleep between the mountains Al Safá and Merwá, in the neighbourhood of Mecca, and there he had a vision, in which he seemed to have proceeded from earth through the seven heavens, even to the throne of God. There is certainly no improbability in his having had some such dream; on the contrary, it is exceedingly likely that, when his imagination was excited by the meditations of the day, some vision of magnificence may have visited his slumbers. It may even have seemed to him that this dream had in it something supernatural, and was therefore a proof of his projects having received a divine sanction. The time stated is exactly the period when Mohammed's enthusiasm was beginning to be tinged with imposture; and at such a period the mind is more than usually ingenious in deceiving itself, catching at every trifle that may serve to stifle the reproaches of conscience.

In the Korán, Mohammed twice alludes to the circumstance, on both occasions quoting it as an indisputable proof of the truth of his mission; but not very distinctly stating whether he regarded the circumstance as a real event or a dream. Indeed, it seems as if he wished to leave the matter so doubtful that the credulous might take it for a real miracle, while an evasion was reserved to meet the objections of the more intelligent. Moawiyáh, the first of the Ommyade Khaliphs, declared that Mohammed told him it was a vision; and as Moawiyáh, was remarkable for any thing rather than credulity, it is probable that Moham-

med had the good sense not to attempt to deceive him; but we find him, in all the authorized traditions, directly asserting the reality of his journey, and generally adding some new circumstance every time he repeated the story. The commentators profited by his example; every new narrator seemed to think it his duty to add some new and wondrous circumstance, until at length it became a regular romance, that has scarcely a parallel in the whole range of fiction.

The following abstract of the tale includes most of the circumstances which form a part of popular belief in the East; we say popular belief, because, though the vulgar, with their usual appetite for the marvellous, implicitly believe the whole, most of the educated Mohammedans adopt the opinion of Moawiyáh, that it was only a dream.

While Mohammed slept, according to the story, the angel Gabriel, wearing seventy pair of wings, and accompanied by an attendant spirit, came and saluted him, declaring that he was commissioned to lead him into the presence of God. To prepare him for appearing in the presence of the Infinitely Pure, Gabriel took out the Prophet's heart, wrung from it the black drop of original sin, filled the cavity with wisdom and faith, and then restored the heart to its former place.

Gabriel then brought to Mohammed the sacred animal on which the prophets used to ride when sent to execute a divine command. This animal, in shape, resembled an ass, but was somewhat larger; its face was like that of a man; it

had the jaws of a horse, the wings of an eagle, and eyes brighter than the star Aldebaran. From its great velocity, it was named Al Borák, the Thunderer, or rather the Author of Lightning. Al Borák was endowed with reason and intelligence, but it was only on special occasions that he was allowed the faculty of speech.*

When Mohammed was preparing to mount Al Borák, the beast kicked with great force, and would not permit him to approach. Upon this, Gabriel interposed, and said, "Stand still, Al Bo-"rák, and be obedient to Mohammed, for never "did a greater favourite of God than he is ascend "thy back."—The faculty of speech was on this occasion conceded to the sacred beast. He replied, "Did not Abraham, O Gabriel! ascend "upon me, when, by the command of God, he "went to visit his son Ishmael? Perhaps, O "thou mighty among the angels, this is the "mediator who is to teach the new religion, of "which the fundamental doctrine shall be THERE "IS NO GOD BUT GOD."—The archangel mildly answered, "Stand still, Al Borák; this is Mo-"hammed, the son of a servant of God, the "chief of the descendants of Adam, the prince "and seal of the prophets; at his right hand is "Paradise, and on his left hell-fire; whoever "witnesses to his truth shall inherit eternal life; "but whoever accuses him of falsehood shall be "cast into hell."—Al Borák then, in a tone of

* This description is taken from the Rabbinical accounts of Balaam's ass. India is the parent of these monstrous combinations of animals; they were adopted in Persia, as appears by the sculptured remains of Persepolis; the Jews learned them during the Babylonish captivity.

humble supplication, replied, "I adjure thee, O "prince of the angels, to prevail upon Moham- "med, thy friend and ally, that he may, by his "intercession, procure for me admittance into "Paradise on the great day of the resurrec- "tion."—Mohammed hearing this, was moved with compassion, and said, "Stand still, Al Borák; "through my intercession thou shalt become "immortal."—The beast then knelt before him, Mohammed ascended, and, ere the eye could wink, he was carried through the air to Jerusalem.

When he reached the holy city, he repaired to the temple, which on this night re-appeared in its pristine splendour, there he met Abraham, Moses and Jesus, with whom he joined in prayer. He then fastened Al Borák to a wondrous ring of iron that had been placed by Solomon near the entrance of the temple for the purpose of fettering the rebellious Gins, and forcing them to witness the worship of the orthodox.

In the mean time Gabriel had prepared a ladder of light, the same which Israel had seen,* extending from earth to heaven. By this the archangel and the prophet ascended until they reached the gate of the first celestial region. No language can express the height and grandeur of this gate, the beauty of the portals, the exquisite workmanship of the doors. Gabriel

* Horace say, "Pictoribus atque poetis Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas;" but the Rabbins claimed a power beyond the poets, for they described the dream of Jacob as a real event, and with edifying accuracy named every step in the ladder.

announced that he had brought Mohammed with him, upon which the massive doors flew open of their own accord, and the archangel led in the prophet.

Mohammed observed, that the first heaven was a floor of silver, from which the stars hung suspended like lamps from a vaulted roof, by chains of gold, each as thick as a mountain. In each of the stars he saw an angel, stationed as a sentinel, to prevent the devils and the rebellious spirits of the middle air from acting as spies on the actions of the inhabitants of heaven. After the prophet had advanced within the gate, he was met by a very aged man, who saluted him by the endearing title of son, called him the best of his children, and solicited the benefit of his prayers. Gabriel informed him that this venerable sage was Adam, the great father of the human race, who was destined to hold an inferior place in heaven.* They passed onwards, and met the wondrous bird, whose feet are in the lowest, while his head is in the highest heaven, a distance of three thousand years' journey asunder. Gabriel informed his companion that this bird was a cock, adding, that every species of animals had angelic representatives in heaven, but that the cock was the most honoured, because it was ever the first to pay morning homage to the Creator. The brilliant appearance of the bird, the splendour of

* This account of Adam's situation in the lowest heaven is borrowed from the Jews; but the Rabbies are not quite agreed upon the point. Maracci's Commentary on the Korân, and Eisenmenger's *Judaism Unveiled*, contain very good collections of Rabbinical traditions, and will be found very convenient to those who have not patience to wade through the tiresome pages of the Talmud.

the emeralds and rubies that adorned his wings, and the melody of his notes, surpass all powers of description. The crowing of this cock is heard by all beings except men and Gins; its cessation will be one of the signs of the near approach of the resurrection.*

Though the distance between each of the heavens is a journey of five hundred years, yet Mohammed, aided by Gabriel, passed it in less than an hour. He found the floor of the second heaven to be a species of iron called Maun: Noah saluted him as he entered, and, on advancing a little further, he met John the Baptist, who made him an obeisance, in acknowledgment of his superiority. Mohammedan authors, inclined to favour the Jews, say that their prophet met Jesus in the second, and Abraham in the seventh, heaven; this order is reversed by those who are more partial to Christianity.

Having entered the third heaven, Mohammed found that its floor was composed of a species of iron called Zaitún. Here he met an angel of such enormous bulk, that the distance between

* The description of this wondrous bird is borrowed from the Talmud of Babylon, almost word for word. The Rabbinical doctors have taken the story from the Persian Smoorg or Simurgh, a bird of great size (its name signifies thirty eagles,) and endowed with superior entelligance. To the same family belongs the Roc of the Arabian Night's Entertainments; perhaps, also, the Eagle that attend upon Jupiter, though he does not exceed the natural dimensions.

There are occasions, when "to be grave exceed all powers of face;" and truly, to discuss, as some authors have done, the dimensions of the Talmudic Zin and the Mohammedan cock mathematically, and show, by the errors in the proportions of size, that no such bird could have existed, appears an excess of gravity to which but few can attain.

his eyes was a journey of seventy thousand days.* Before this mysterious being was a table, on which he was constantly writing some words and blotting out others; Mohammed inquired the meaning of this, and was told that the angel had the charge of the table of human life, from which he erased the names of those whose term of existence had expired, and inserted the names of those who were just coming into the world. In every heaven there were angelic inhabitants peculiar to it; and the number of these beings increased, the higher he ascended. Mohammed, having joined in devotion with the angels of the third heaven, passed on to the fourth.

The purest gold formed the floor of the fourth heaven: the angels, by which it was inhabited were superior in beauty and intelligence to all those whom Mohammed had yet seen; one of them, whose stature equalled that of the angel guarding the table in the third heaven, was engaged in constantly lamenting the sins of men, and praying for their repentance and pardon.†

* Dr. Prideaux takes the trouble of showing the arithmetical blunder in this statement; he proves that the distance, supposing the angel, when standing up, would exactly touch the ceiling, could only be fourteen thousand days' journey. Gibbon accuses the doctor of exaggerating the absurdities in this narrative; a charge wholly groundless: Prideaux's error is attributing the whole invention to Mohammed, instead of the commentators. Mohammed only supplied a general outline, which may be seen in the Korán and the Mischcat, the rest was supplied by the perverted ingenuity of his followers.

† This angel is of Christian parentage: he is mentioned by several of the writers of the dark ages, especially in the monkish treatises on Paradise. One of these worthies, Ægidius de Columna, if we remember aright, gravely proves the existence of this being, from the Scriptural text "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," for, argues he, joy could not exist

Edris, or Enoch, was the patriarch that met Mohammed here, and, according to some narratives, accompanied him to the fifth heaven.

Aaron saluted Mohammed on his entrance into the fifth heaven, whose floor was composed of the finest adamant. From this place, the prophet obtained a view of the hell reserved for faithless disciples and unbelieving Arabs; its horrors were of course aggravated, by the strong contrast they afforded to the pleasures and glories by which they were surrounded.

The floor of the sixth heaven was composed of crystal, which was not only transparent itself, but enabled the inhabitants to see through other bodies; for hence the interior of all the former heavens, and the earth itself, could be clearly beheld.* Moses here met the prophet, and, at sight of him, burst into tears, lamenting that a boy had been sent after him, who would, in a few years, bring more converts to the truth, and consequently more individuals to Paradise, than there were now Israelites in the celestial regions, though the Jews had possessed a divine law during so many centuries.

Mohammed at length reached the seventh heaven, whose magnificence exceeded that of all

unless there had been previous sorrow. The curious reader will find many similar instances of idle inventions in the tract of Ludovicus Vives, *on the Abuse of Learning*, in Cave's *Historia Literaria*, and in Morhob's *Polyhistor*:—The Apocryphal *Revelations of St. Peter* we have not seen, but the extracts given from the work, in Gagnier's Notes on Abulfeda, prove that the Mohammedans borrowed largely from it in this narrative.

* This property is assigned to pure crystal, in many of the ancient Persian legends. The reader need scarcely be reminded how frequently magic glasses are mentioned in the Arabian Nights.

the preceding. Its floor was composed of embodied light.* Here he saw an angel the largest of God's creatures; it had seventy thousand faces, each face had seventy thousand mouths, in every mouth were seventy thousand tongues, and every tongue incessantly praised God in seventy thousand languages. We have already mentioned that there is some difference between the commentators, with respect to the persons whom Mohammed met in the seventh heaven; the greater number, however, declare that it was Abraham, and add, that he entertained the prophet in a palace called Al Mamúr, or "the visited," because it is visited daily by seventy thousand† angels. In shape, it resembles the Temple of Mecca, and, should it ever descend from heaven, it will fall exactly on that holy spot. Here Gabriel presented Mohammed with two cups, one containing milk, and the other wine; the prophet chose the former, upon which a voice was heard, saying, "Wisely hast thou "chosen, O Mohammed, beloved apostle of "God, for hadst thou taken the wine, thy nation "would soon have apostatized, and their enter-"prises have consequently proved unsuccess-"ful."

Near Al Mamúr is planted a stupendous lote-

* This notion is borrowed from the Talmudists.

† The frequent occurrence of this number, which is so great a favourite with the Rabbins, leads us to suppose that they were the inventors of this part of the fable. The description of Mamúr, however, is taken from the Apocryphal *Revelations of St. Peter*, as Gagnier has shown, by extracts from that work. It may be necessary to add, that the Apocryphal description is a very dull imitation of the account given of the New Jerusalem, by St. John, in the Apocalypse.

tree, watered by the four rivers of Paradise, beyond which none of the angels, not even Gabriel himself, is permitted to pass, and beyond which, Mohammed alone was suffered to acquire knowledge. It bears fruits shaped like water pots, and leaves like the ears of elephants. The delicious taste of its fruits transcends all that the imagination can conceive; and one of them would be sufficient for the sustenance of the universe.* At this tree Mohammed met a new guide, named Israfil, by whom he was led over infinite tracts of space, and through myriads of Celestial Intelligences, incessantly employed in singing the praises of God.† At length Mohammed entered the Beatific Presence, and was permitted to approach within two bows'-length of the throne of God. On the throne, he saw engraved the words which he subsequently made the symbol of his faith, THERE IS NO GOD BUT GOD, AND MOHAMMED IS THE APOSTLE OF GOD. The words spoken by God to his servant could not be revealed; we are only told, that God ordered the Mussulmans to pray fifty times every day, that the prophet, by the advice of Moses, begged that the number should be reduced to five, and that he obtained his request. Some of the commentators add many extravagant circumstances

* This description is borrowed from the perverted account given by the Talmudists. of the "tree of life."

† The names, orders, powers, &c., of these superior classes of emanative beings, are recorded by some of the Mohammedan doctors; but the whole is borrowed from the incomprehensible system of the Jewish Cabala. The reader, who has any curiosity to know more of the absurd imaginings, gravely published on this subject as ascertained truths, may consult the Celestial Hierarchy of Dionysius, the Areopagite.

to this, the most blasphemous portion of the narrative, the repetition of which would justly be regarded as offensive. Israfil, when the interview was concluded, led Mohammed back to Gabriel, and they at once set out on their return to Mecca; as they approached the earth, the sun was rising over the chain of the Caucasus, and they saw the kingdoms of Armenia and Azerbiján like two small grass-plots, beneath them. At Jerusalem they met Al Borák, who transported the prophet to Mecca, ere the sun had fully risen on the earth, so that the entire journey occupied but a single night.

It would be as unfair to blame Mohammed for the whole of this monstrous legend, as to accuse the author of the apocryphal book of Enoch, for all the nonsense which the Eastern monks have written respecting the visits of the angels to earth. In fact, we are able to trace the process of the formation of the legend, if not with certainty, at least with very strong probability. Mohammed had a singular dream, which made a strong impression on his mind,—so strong that he spoke of it as a proof of his mission. The asseverations of Abú Bekr, induced some of the early Mussulmans to receive it as such, and Mohammed, having discovered the use to which the tale could be applied, frequently repeated it to his followers, occasionally adding some new circumstances to enchance his authority. His followers, eager to exaggerate his importance, worked into the tale all the circumstances that they found in the legends of the Jewish rabbins and Syrian monks; and after all, they left untouched, in both, fictions infinitely

more monstrous than those they worked into the narrative. Of this, the reader will soon be convinced, that consults Basnage's *History of the Jews*, Eisenmenger on the Rabbinical Fables, or any of the tracts on Paradise and the angels produced by the monks of the Eastern or Western Churches, before the revival of learning.

The superstitious attention paid by the Orientals to dreams is sufficiently notorious, and many of the Mohammedan traditions relate the interpretations, which the prophet gave of the dreams of his followers. Tabari says, "One day "an Arab of the desert came to search for the "prophet, (may the blessing of God be upon "him!) and said to him; 'I saw last night in "my dreams a large field, and in the midst of "this field was a large pulpit having seven steps, "and no more; you, O prophet, stood on the "lowest step.' The apostle of God (may God be "propitious to him, and grant peace to him and "his?) replied; 'the field that you saw is this "world, which will have seven thousand years "of existence; and if you saw me on the lowest "step, it is because I have come in the last "thousand of these seven thousand years, and "it is a sign that the end of the world is not "far distant.' Some Jews who were present "said, 'we have discovered in the Pentateuch "what you have just mentioned.'" To the Arabs, indeed, the 'Night Journey,' told as a dream, would have proved nearly as strong an argument in favour of Mohammed, as if it had been related as an historical argument. The emperor Timúr, in his auto-biography, assures us, that a dream which one of the Syeds (descendants of Moham-

med) had, just after his accession to the throne, greatly tended to strengthen his power. The imperial author thus tells the story: "In the "year of the Hegira 771 (A. D. 1378), when I "had driven the Jetes (Uzbeks) out of Tùran "and mounted the throne, and had directed the "royal proclamation to be read from all the pul- "pits, the Syeds, the prelates, the rich and the poor, all raised their hands to heaven in prayer "for my prosperity; but Khuajé Abyd, who "was the most celebrated prelate of that time, "forbade them to pray for me, saying, 'do not "pray for this murderer and blood-thirsty Turk, "who has put to death an innumerable number "of Mussulmans, nor repeat blessings on him.' "On that very night, the Khuajé dreamed that "he saw me standing in the presence of his "holiness the Prophet, that he entered and "several times made his obeisance to Mohammed "without his salutation being returned: at "length he called out, 'O messenger of God, do "you permit this wretch Timúr, who has mur- "dered hundreds of thousands of your followers, "and who has destroyed the habitations of so "many Mussulmans, to stand near you, whilst "you do not return the salutation of me, who "am the zealous supporter of your religion, and "the establisher of your law? His holiness re- "plied to him, in an angry manner; 'although "Timúr has shed much of the blood of my "followers, as he has been the friend, the sup- "porter, and respecter of my posterity and de- "scendants, why dost thou forbid the people to "pray for and bless him?' The Khuajé having "awoke, came even during the night to me, and

"ask pardon. When this intelligence reached "the people, they all raised their hands in prayer "for my prosperity, and considering me as sup- "ported by the Divine favour, bore witness to "my right."

There may, indeed, be some suspicion of collusion in this instance, but it is sufficient to prove the great influence of dreams over eastern nations; indeed, Timúr says, that he records his own dreams as proofs of his having been an instrument chosen to execute the divine decrees.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NATURE AND STYLE OF THE KORAN.

WHEN Mohammed was asked to attest the truth of his mission by a miracle, he appealed to the Korán, and demanded whether his adversaries could produce any work that could rival it in sublimity and beauty? they tried and failed. Lebid, the most celebrated poet of Yemen, brought a moral poem to the Kaaba which he suspended in the temple, as was the custom; Mohammed hung by it a passage from the Korán, which when Lebid had read, he exclaimed, "no one could write these words without the immediate inspiration of God," and immediately embraced Mohammedanism.* The Mussulmans of

* The quotation which produced such an effect on Lebid's mind was the following passage, describing the Korán and the character of those by whom it is rejected:—

"There is nothing doubtful in this book: it is a direction to "the pious, who believe in the mysteries of faith, who observe the "appointed times of prayer, who distribute alms out of what "we have bestowed upon them who believe in the revelation

the present day regard the volume as an unrivalled prodigy, and are wondrously affected by the measured march of its sentences, the harmony and variety of its metrical cadences, and the irregular recurrences of its single and double rhymes. It is scarcely possible to imitate in a western language the modulations of which the Arabic is susceptible, but as the beauties which the Arabians most admire are necessarily lost in the literal version of Sale, we have ventured, after the example of Mr. Von Hammer, to try

"which hath been sent down to thee, and in that which hath "been sent down to the prophets before thee, and who have "firm assurance in the life to come: these are directed by "their Lord and they shall prosper.

"As for the unbelievers, whether thou admonish them or do "not admonish them, they will not believe, God hath sealed up "their hearts and their hearing; a dimness covereth their sight, "and they shall suffer a grievous punishment.

"There are some who says we believe in God and the last "day, but in reality are not believers, they seek to deceive God, "and those who do believe; but they deceive themselves only, "and are not sensible thereof.

"They are like unto one who kindleth a fire, and when it "hath enlightened all around him, he shuts his eyes, God "taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness; they "shall not see; they are deaf, and dumb, and blind, therefore "they will not repent.

"Or, like a stormy cloud from heaven fraught with darkness, "thunder, and lightning; they put their fingers in their ears, "because of the noise of the thunder, for fear of death. God encompasseth the infidels; the lightning wanteth but little to "take away their sight; so often as it enlighteneth them they "walk therein, but when the darkness cometh on them, they "stand still."—*Carlyle's Specimens*, 2, 3.

There is however, some reason to believe that Lebid was actuated merely by temporal motives, for he persevered in the use of luxuries forbidden by the Korán, and was by no means a strict observer of the ceremonies enjoined to all who professed Islám.

the experiment of rendering two short chapters as nearly as possible in their original form.

CHAP. 99.—*The Earthquake at the Day of Judgment.*

1. When the earth with shaking is quaking,
2. When from her burthen she off is breaking,
3. And man demands, what aileth her?
4. On that day her tidings she shall be unfolding,
5. Which then the Lord revealeth her.
6. On that day shall men come in throngs their works showing;
7. And who one grain of good has done, shows it then;
8. And who one grain of ill has done, shows it then.

CHAP. 112.—*The Declartion of God's Unity.**

1. Say; God is one God
2. He is the eternal.
3. He hath nought begotten.
4. He is not begotten.
5. Like him there is none.

But though many splendid passages may be found in the Korán, sublime in thought and grand in expression, yet the entire work is one

* This chapter is greatly celebrated in the traditions. "Abu-Dardáa reported that his highness said, 'Is not one of you able to repeat a third part of the Korán in one night?' The companions said. 'How can any one repeat a third in one night; for it is not without difficulty.' Mohammed said, 'The chapter commencing with these words, '*Say, God is one God,*' is equal to a third part of the Korán in rewards.—*Mischcat-ul-Musábih,* i. 503.

of the most tiresome in existence, utterly destitute of arrangement or connexion, and frequently at variance with common sense. To understand the causes of this confusion, we must remember, that Mohammed actually propagated two religions perfectly distinct; the one almost purely ascetic, while he remained in obscurity at Mecca; the other breathing a mingled spirit of sensualism and propagandism, when his power was established at Medina. The chapters which inculcate the former, are infinitely superior both in matter and manner, to those which teach the latter doctrines: and when the Mussulmans are asked to justify their extravagant eulogies of the Korán, they invariably refer to the passages revealed at Mecca. We have already seen that Mohammed forged revelations to suit every occasion however trifling, and that on his death-bed, he wished to dictate a more consistent standard of faith, than the miscellaneous collection of revelations which he had aggregated; hence we deem it probable, that he never designed to collect his scattered revelations, and that had he undertaken the task, the Korán would now present less grossness and less absurdity. After his death, all his revelations were collected by command of Abú-Bekr, and put together without any regard to order or consistency. A collection of the Sibylline leaves, put together after the wind had scattered them, by a person who could not read, would scarcely present a more anomalous compound than the Korán in its present state; the leaves of all the books in a library jumbled together would scarcely exhibit more disorder and confusion. The comment-

ators have, with tolerable accuracy distinguished the Meccan from the Medinese chapters, but there is reason to believe, that many of the chapters contain passages which did not originally belong to them, and that the complete disentanglement is reserved for some future critic, if such a being could exist in a Mohammedan country. It is, however, of importance to keep steadily in view the distinction between the pure Islám of Mecca,* and the corrupted system substituted for it at Medina, since we find that when Mohammedan nations became civilized, they have chosen the former, while the barbarous followers of the prophet have adhered to the latter. There would be little addition and still less alteration required to reconcile pure Islamism with pure Christianity; the more both become corrupt, the more they diverge into hopeless irreconcilement. A century has elapsed since Mr. Sale declared his belief that the glory of overthrowing the Korán was reserved for Protestants; we believe that the toil will be diminished, if sufficient attention is paid to the fact, that the Korán contains in itself what may be called "a middle term between Mohammedanism and Christianity, namely, the doctrines of Islám as first propounded at Mecca.

The question of the authorship of the Korán, was fierecely disputed during the life-time of Mohammed; those who performed the task of com-

* The distinction appears to have been pointed out by Al Jahedh, who said that the Korán was a body which might sometimes be turned into a man and sometimes into a beast. "The two faces of the Korán" is also no unusual phrase with Arabic writers See Pococke and D'Herbelot.

pilation for Abú-Bekr, had the means of determining the point, but from their manifest ignorance, were utterly incapable of using them. There seems great probability in the conjecture of Golius, that the letters we find prefixed to several of the chapters, whose explanation has defied the conjectures of commentators, were the private marks of Mohammed's secretaries and assistants; of the great test, uniformity of style, few western scholars could venture to pronounce a judgment, and the orientals are utterly ignorant of criticism. As far, however, as we may venture to conjecture, the substance of the Korán was obtained from a great variety of sources, but all the merits of its form belong to Mohammed. If he had an assistant, we should adopt the tradition, that he was a Syrian Christian rather than a Jew.

The orthodox Mohammedans, believe that the Korán is uncreate and eternal, subsisting in the very essence of God; they say that it was brought down to the lowest heaven by Gabriel, and then revealed piecemeal to the prophet. This matter was long the subject of bitter contention, and occasioned a civil war in the age of the Abasside Khaliphs.

All Mussulmans agree in according to their sacred book the greatest respect and veneration; they dare not touch it without being first legally purified, and when reading it, they never hold it lower than their girdles. They swear by it, consult it on all weighty occasions, inscribe sentences from it on their seals and banners, and never hear it quoted without expressing sentiments of esteem and obedience. An interest-

ing anecdote is related of the respect which Hassan the son of Ali, showed for the following passage: " Run with emulation, to obtain re-" mission from your Lord; and paradise, whose " breadth equalleth the heavens and the earth, " which is prepared for the godly; who give " alms in prosperity and adversity; who bridle " their anger and forgive men; for God loveth " the beneficent." A slave having spilled a dish boiling hot on Hassan, fell at his feet, and re peated the words, " Paradise is for those who bri-" dle their anger, " Hassan answered, " I am not angry:" the slave continued, " and forgive men:" " I forgive you, " said Hassan. The slave, however, finished the verse, " for God loveth the beneficent." " Since it is so," said Hassan, " I give you your freedom, and four hunderd pices of gold."

Besides its distinctive name Korán, the book is called also, Al Forkán, or, " the distinguisher," because it distinguishes between good and evil, Al Mosháf, " the volume," and Al Kitáb, "the book;" just as we use the phrases Scripture and Bible, in an emphatic sense; it is sometimes also called Al Diklu, or, " the admontion," a name which is also given to the Pentateuch and the Gospel.

THE END